

INTERNATIONAL **MUSICIAN** AND RECORDING WORLD

July 1980 60p

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Brochure Inside

STEWART COPELAND On The Beat

Magazine Brand X The Members

Recording World: MXR flanger/doubler;
Furman RV-1 reverb unit;
Editing feature; Roy Thomas-Baker;
Ampex Golden Reel Award; R. G. Jones
studios.

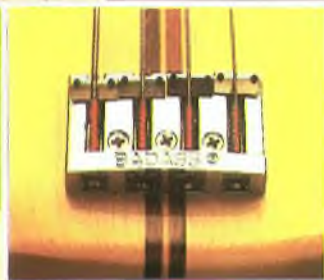
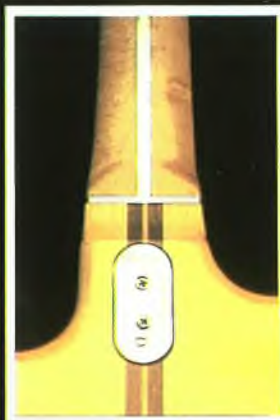
Tests; Aria Herb Ellis electric guitar; Levoi
"Macaferrri" acoustic; Rickenbacker 4001 bass;
Hoshino Professional drum kit; Logan string synth;
WEM Soundman power amp;
Muffon Bi Phase and Vol-Wah

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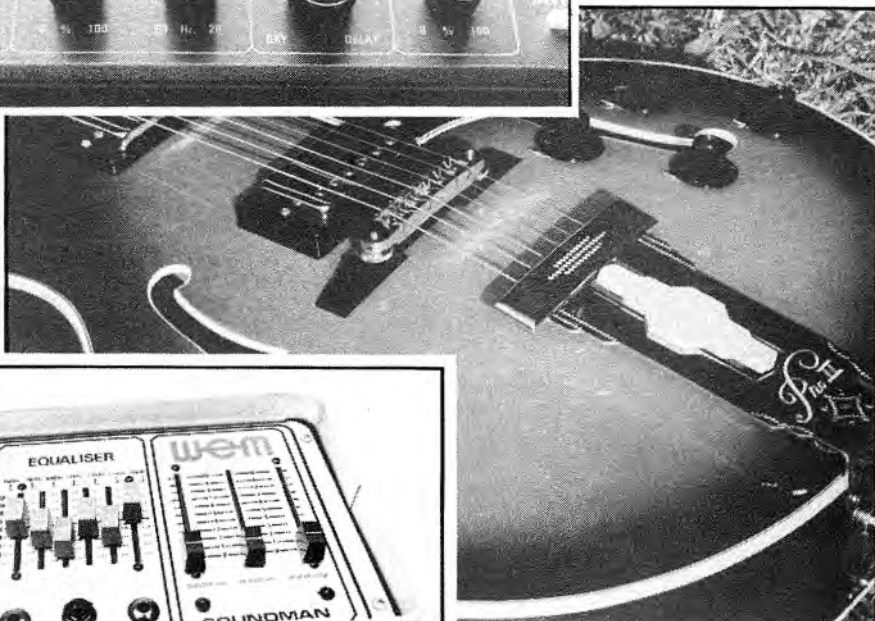
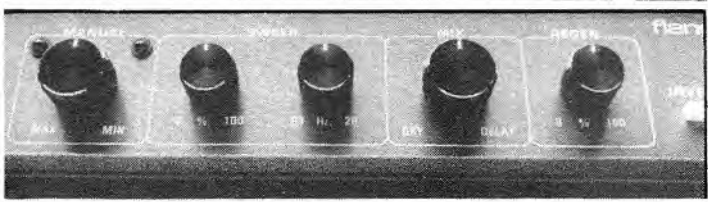
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The man behind the Police beat explains his approach to drumming and the use of effects which has made him one of the most interesting drummers on the scene



Editorial

This month we feature Stewart Copeland, of that fab trio Police on the front cover. In many ways their success over the past 12 months has been remarkable, but it is a story which should give heart to musicians.

All three had been around the music scene for some time before the formation of Police and all three are excellent musicians. The fact they financed their own trip to America and gigned incessantly to make it, is an object lesson to any band.

Apparently one of their best gigs over there was to just three people, which says much for their professionalism. I suppose like many I was sceptical when they returned to this country, but two gigs convinced me they were no one-hit-wonders.

They score on many levels, not least being their musicianship. They have proved that you can make it by hard work and talent. I wish them well.

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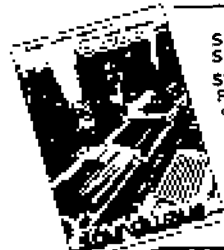
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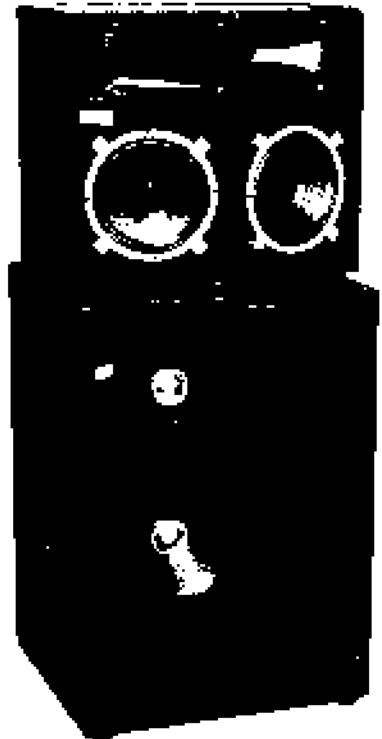
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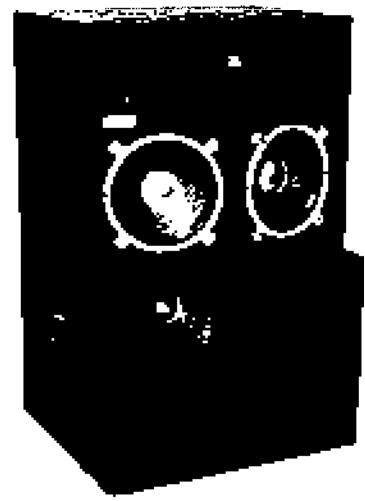
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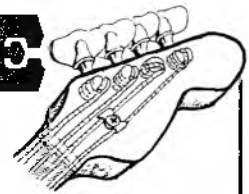
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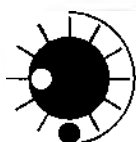
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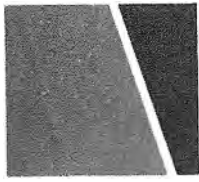


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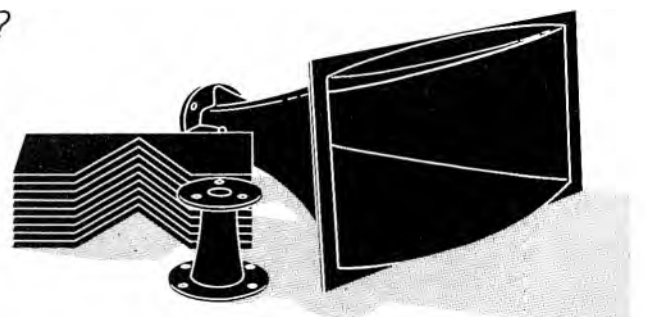


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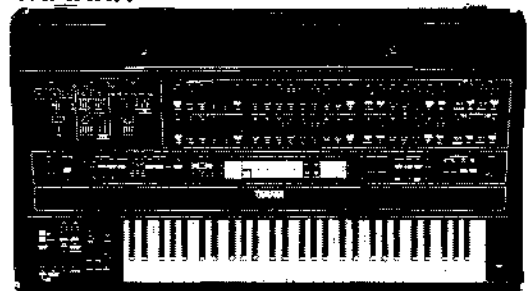
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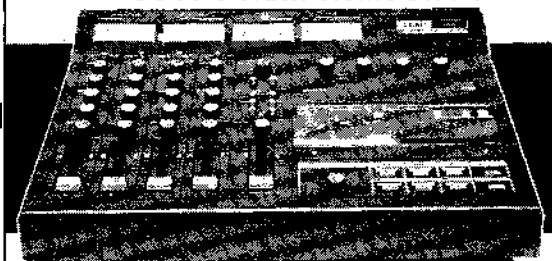
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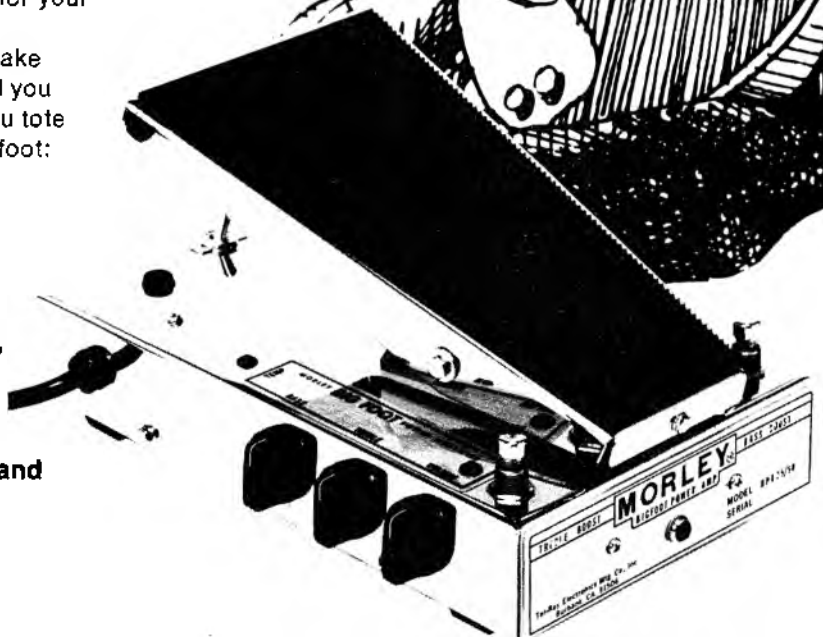
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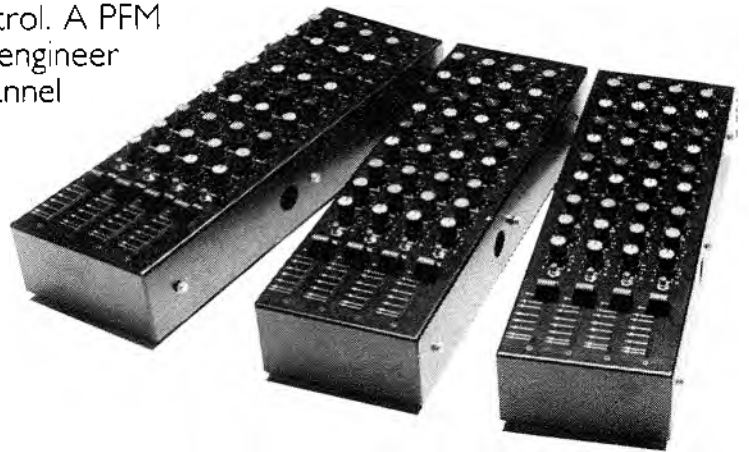
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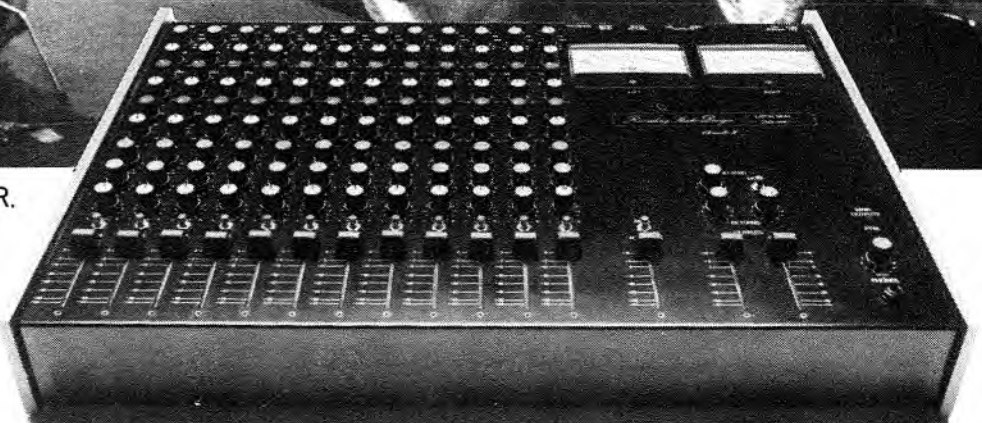
foldback mix facilities, effects or echo send and return and full stereo pan control. A PFM button allows the engineer to listen to any channel on its own at the touch of a button and naturally there are separate



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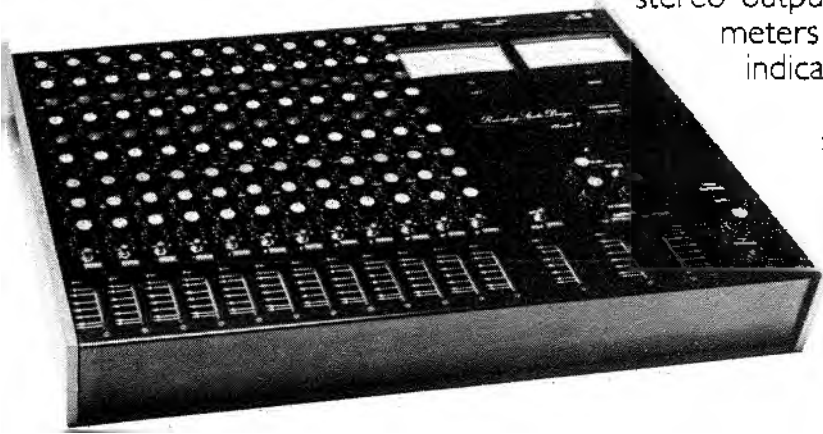


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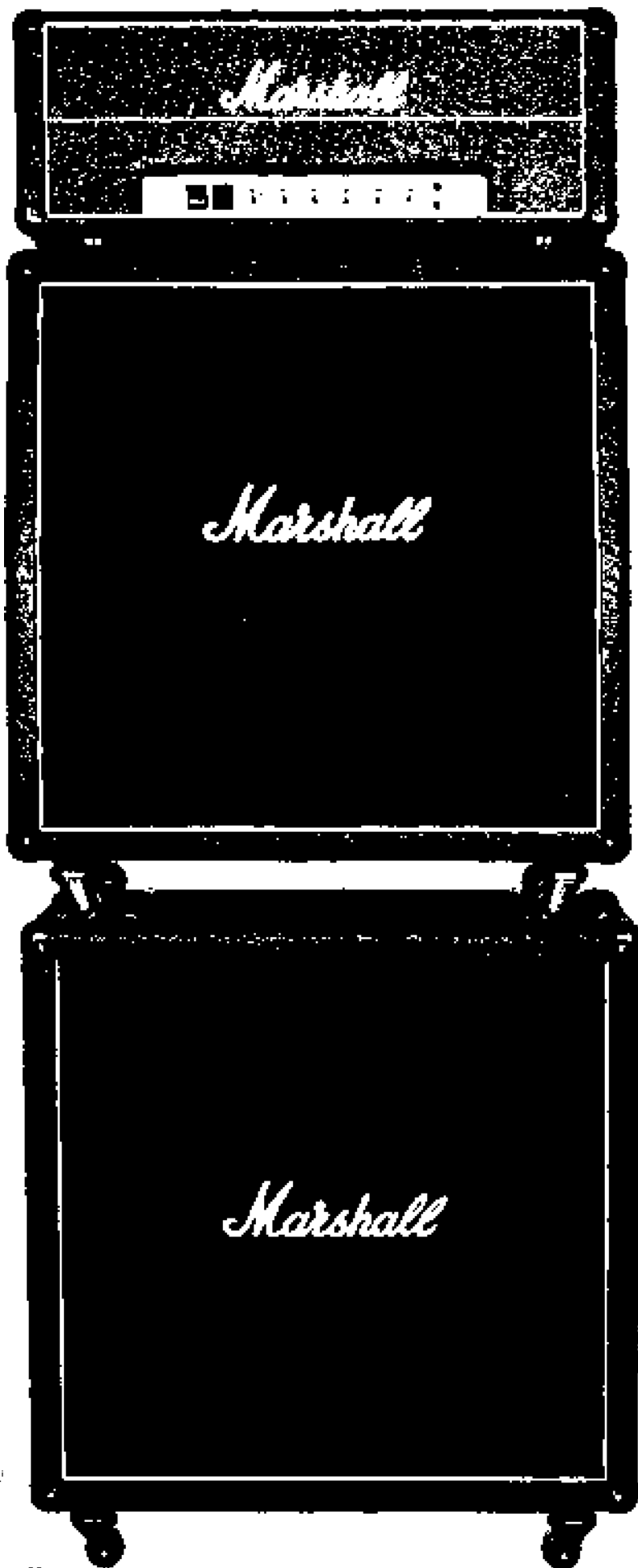
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8. Input jack for connecting guitar or other instrument.
9. Output jack for direct sound from electric guitar.
10. Connection jacks for foot switches used to turn effects on and off.
11. Cancel switch to turn off all tone color switches at once.
12. Volume balance between instrumental and synthesizer sections.
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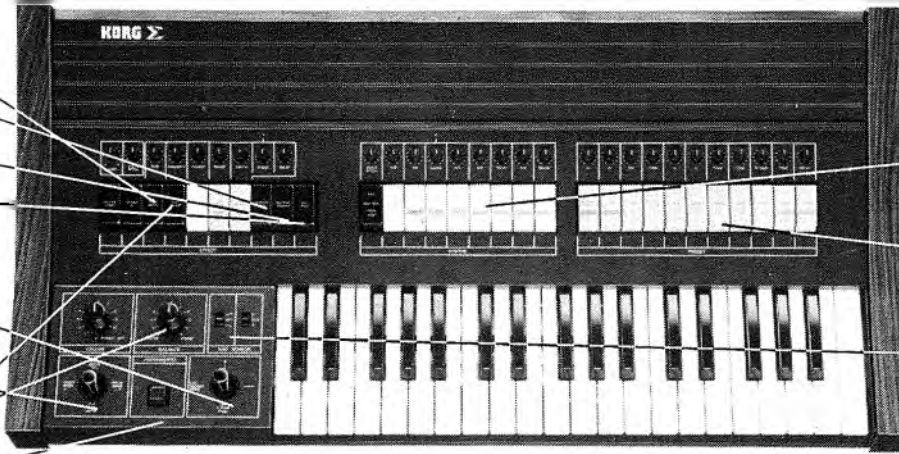
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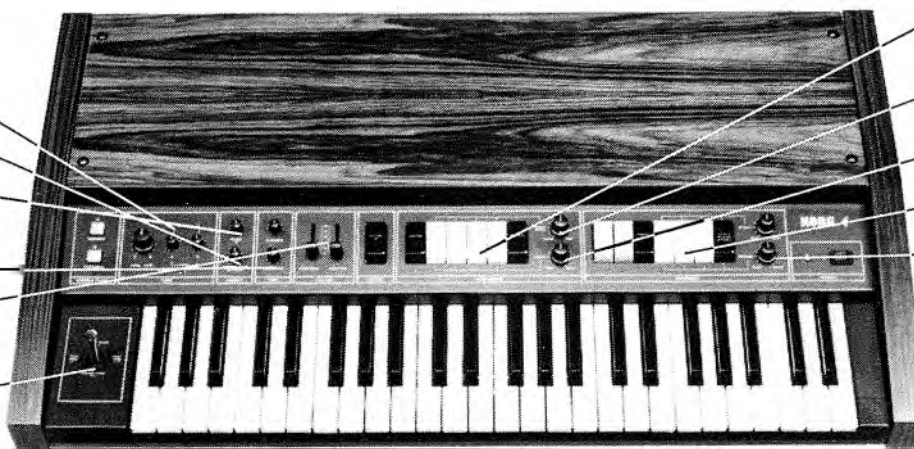
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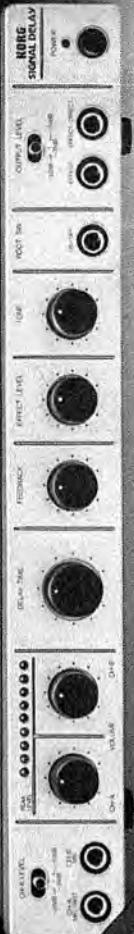
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SD-400 SIGNAL DELAY

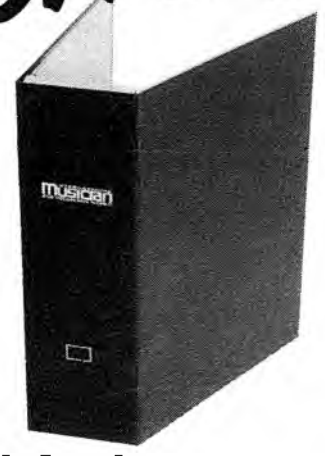
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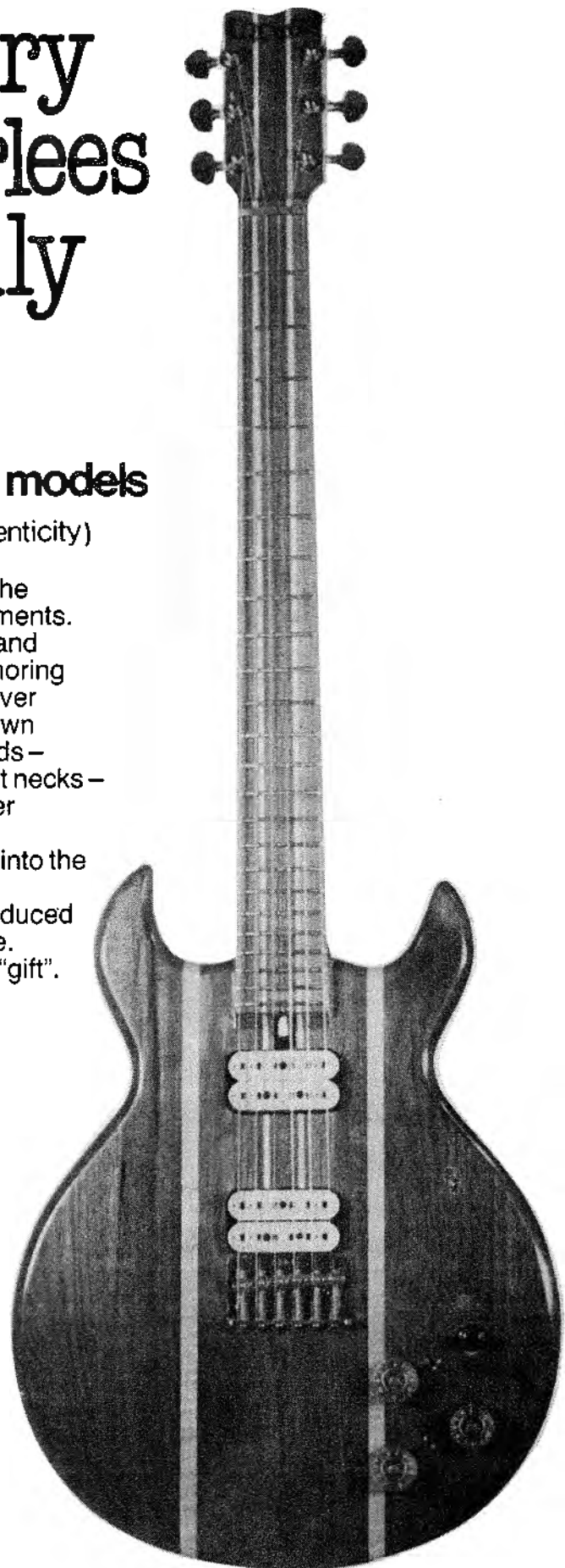
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The Multivox Rhythm ACE FR-3

Until recently, most musicians regarded rhythm units as a sort of jumped up metronome. But the recent advances made in electronics and the increasing demands made on today's drummers have brought these units right back into popularity.

Leading this return is the new FR-3 Rhythm Ace from Multivox. This incredibly versatile unit can recreate twenty basic rhythms at the flick of a switch, which can then be adapted utilising the sensitive Tempo facility.

By keeping this unit as simple to operate as possible, Multivox have created a unit that is ideal for live work, where an easily variable, versatile unit is a necessity.

The control panel of the FR-3 Rhythm Ace is laid out to bring every control quickly and easily to hand, the lower controls are the basic rhythm selectors in a twin-level layout with a simple selector between the levels. The lower level contains; habanera; rock; jazz; cha-cha; Latin rock; ballad; merengue; and rhumba. While the upper level contains; waltz; foxtrot; tango; disco; swing; mambo; bossa nova; slow rock; samba; and beguine. All these can be controlled via the tempo selector giving almost limitless variation. Up to two of the presets can be utilised at any one time to give an incredible number of basic rhythms to work from.

All these, coupled with a massive eight instrument

sounds, plus a balance control to vary the tone colour makes this one of the most comprehensive rhythm units available.

To aid musicians who will use this unit in a live situation, Multivox have also added a tempo visual indicator, which can operate while the unit is silent, enabling you to set the rhythm before switching the sound into the main PA. Instantaneous start is operated either by the touch switch, located on the top of the unit, or by a foot switch, connected to the rear of the unit.

Operational in all situations the FR-3 Rhythm Ace can be coupl-

ed either to the stage amps or to your own audio system using either the High or Low outputs respectively.

Of course every rhythm unit has its limits, so Multivox have made the FR-3 part of a complete 'family' of rhythm units ranging from the FR-3 (the most popular unit) right up to the FR-8 (perhaps the most sophisticated unit available). So, should you manage to exhaust your imagination on the FR-3, you can move on to the FR-4, then perhaps the FR-6, and eventually the FR-8. Pleasant Journey!



MULTIVOX FR-3 Rhythm Unit

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Multivox MX-312 Multi Echo Chamber

Many musicians swear by the simple, but effective 'tape loop' system, where the sound is recorded on one head and is returned by a series of playback heads following on in sequence. There are many of this type of unit available, but now Multivox have updated this basic design to include the very latest in echo and reverb technology and produced the MX-312 Multi Echo Chamber. No compromise has been made in the design and production of this exceptional echo machine.

Featuring 4 playback, 1 erase and 1 record heads the MX-312 is fitted with a comprehensive quota of 8 mode selectors, providing the performer with almost limitless echo and reverb sound, either individually, or in any combination.

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Multivox MX-312 Multi Echo Chamber

Multivox MXD-5 Analog DE Delay

These are just a few of the multitude of facilities and effects available to the performer on the Multivox MX-312 Multi Echo Chamber.

Multivox MXD-5 Analog Delay

For those who prefer Analog delay systems, the LSC offer the Multivox MXD-5 Analog Delay. This rack mounting unit is specifically designed to interface with other effects systems, amplifiers and recording and PA mixing desks, boasting a full complement of Reverb, Repeat, Echo and Delay facilities as well as a five base vertical LED visual indicator system for fast, simple recognition of the input level and

the input overload.

The intensity of the reverb and echo facilities are individually controllable, with the maximum decay time of the Reverb section a massive three seconds!

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Both of these units have been chosen as a mail-order bargain from Chase Musicians, bringing quality, professional echoes direct into your home.

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LETTERS

Talking Speakers

Dear Sir:

Belated, but I hope of interest to musos, here's some comeback on Ken Dibble's multitudinous scribings:

The Calrec 600 series mikes discussed recently are truly excellent, the only problem being the need to provide 45 volts, and to be able to provide it in a reasonably foolproof manner so that your best Beyer or Shure doesn't go up in smoke!

If you take a 45 volt rail to your deak or stagebox, the best bet is to use a four-pin XLR (or other esoteric connector) solely for the Calrec. If the Calrec frequently needs to be plugged into *anything*, then a good solution is to make a remote power supply with four-pin XLR. An adjacent three-pin XLR carries the unbalanced output wires; a standard three-pin XLR lead can then be used to connect the remote power supply/adaptor box to the input on any other item of gear.

On the subject of the Speakercheck series, six per cent distortion on a 15-inch driver sounds terrible, but is it really? The Gauss speakers, which were reprimanded for high distortion at their rated power were probably intended for use by guitarists, in which case the distortion would be very welcome in most cases. If the drivers are used in PA applications, typically crossing over between 100-300Hz, the distortion is probably nothing to worry about.

Over 20 years ago, James Moir found that 25 per cent second harmonic was generally inaudible below 100Hz, whilst three per cent was only just detectable at 200Hz. Similar figures apply to the third harmonic. If you load a bass horn with a Gauss speaker and feed it a legitimate 400 watts, the SPL will cause about 10-20 per cent air overload distortion in the horn, so five per cent in the driver is nothing to worry about. On a good four or five-way sound system, you can hear grossly distorted bass, but it doesn't worry the ears at all, provided the midrange and treble are dead clean.

Finally, a bass speaker with relatively high levels of second and third harmonic distortion can add "punch" and "guts"

to a sound system. While this is blasphemy to the gods of high fidelity, the overtones present many well mask far nastier sounds, such as high order harmonics, and can enhance the character of a sound system.

These comments are in no way intended to dispute Ken Dibble's method of testing the power of a driver, but merely to allow readers to judge drivers exciting high distortion with an unprejudiced eye.

Long may the Speakercheck series continue!

*Ben J. Duncan (B&J Sound)
Lincoln*

ROLAND RESPONDS

Dear Sir:

I was rather surprised when I read the somewhat negative review of the Roland RS-09 Organ/Strings by Mr Robin Lumley in the January issue of your magazine. Among other things, I felt that it was rather unfair to continuously compare the RS-09 with the Roland RS-202, since they were not designed to be in the same category or price range. The RS-09 was not designed as a base keyboard, but was designed to become part of a multi keyboard system, or to produce fill-in harmony and orchestration in a recording situation.

In a multi-keyboard situation, where the RS-09 would usually be played with only one hand, 44 keys would certainly be sufficient for that purpose. Fill-in or background harmony would usually not require more keys either. I remember objections raised by pianists about 10 years ago when the 61-key electronic piano was introduced. These pianos have since become well accepted because 61 keys are sufficient for the job electric pianos were designed to do, and in our case 44 keys are sufficient for the job the RS-09 was designed to do. For the consumer, fewer keys can mean a lower cost (which is obviously desirable). While Roland may sacrifice keys to reduce a cost, we will never sacrifice quality for a cost reduction.

Mr Lumley mentions a number of the RS-09's features, but does so with a rather negative undertone due to his "disappointment". He

completely neglected to mention the stereo output, an important feature of this instrument. If he had been a little less negative about the RS-09, he would have presented these features for the merits that they are, instead of as faults. His statement that "there's a master volume control which lets you play very loud and can be turned down to merely deafening" suggests that he probably used the wrong output level.

The RS-09 provides a choice of three output levels as opposed to two levels (offered on previous instruments of this type). The new level is 0dBm, much higher than previously available, which permits the RS-09 to be used with ordinary hi-fi amplifiers. If he used this 0dBm output with an amplifier input designed for an instrument level (such as that produced by the RS-202), the impression he would receive from the resulting distortion would certainly explain his negative feelings. Using the higher level, distortion would be unavoidable because the volume control on most amplifiers comes after the input stage. His failure to discover such a mistake is somewhat understandable. The distortion would be in the form of clipping which, with string sounds, would be difficult to hear as distortion. The sound quality however, would be greatly affected.

An example of the negative approach Mr Lumley has taken in the review is where he states that the RS-09 "is not a true polyphonic in that it doesn't operate on the channel-assign principle". The channel-assign principle is a reasonable attempt at producing polyphony in instruments such as voltage-controlled synthesizers which, by their very nature, are monophonic. Channel-assign systems are not truly polyphonic because they do not allow playing two separate voices which are *completely* independent of each other.

Such a system does not allow you to play a flute part which crosses back and forth over an oboe part, for example. *True* polyphony in a keyboard instrument is possible only with a split keyboard instrument or with separate

keyboards, and that's what multi-keyboard systems are all about. The RS-09 is just as polyphonic as a piano or single manual organ. It would be meaningless to apply a channel-assign system to the RS-09, just as it would be to apply such a system to the RS-202 or similar string synthesizers.

To cite one more example of Mr Lumley's negative attitude, we took advantage of a very simple circuit device to expand the flexibility of the control over the tone colour of the sound, but he presents this in a negative light by mentioning "a slider-type pot for controlling overall tone content, not terribly sophisticated as it's probably only a treble roll-off control, but no matter." The reader is left feeling that the use of such a simple device lowers the quality of the instrument. I know of several instruments selling for over \$100,000 which employ such devices. I feel that such statements by the reviewer of a product are unfair.

The RS-09 was introduced here in Japan more than a year and a half ago and has become one of our best selling products. It is used by a number of well-known professional multi-keyboard artists and in many professional recording studios. Its success here led us to introduce it onto the foreign market and the initial response has been quite good. We continually depend on feedback from professional musicians from all over the world to help us improve our products, but Mr Lumley's reaction is so different from the reaction of most musicians that I feel certain that there must have been some misunderstanding between him and the RS-09. We would certainly appreciate it if he would take another look at it.

In closing, I wonder if Mr Lumley took the trouble to read the instruction manual packed with the instrument. I feel that if the RS-09 is connected to an amplifiers with the proper output level that the sound quality would be at least as good as the RS-202, or even better when using the stereo output.

*Ikutaro Kakehashi, President
Roland Corporation (Japan)*

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BUZZ

Book launch

A few weeks ago Stephen Delft was invited to the Early Music Centre near Holland Park tube station in London, to celebrate the publication of a new book on musical instruments jointly authored by Susanne and Samuel Palmer.

The title is "The Hurdy-Gurdy", which did not come entirely as a surprise to Stephen, as he says "I have known Sam Palmer and his interest in Hurdy-Gurdies for some years, and I had heard that a book was in preparation. The important point is that until now, there was very little information available on the history, construction and playing of this unusual instrument. The Palmers' book fills an important gap and is likely, in the future, to become the standard reference book on this subject."

Several examples of old and modern Hurdy-Gurdies were on display, together with partly assembled instruments and working drawings. During the afternoon, the small yard behind the Early Music Centre was packed with friends and visitors enjoying the musical entertainment from members of the group "Blowzabella", who played Balkan and early European music on bagpipes, drums, melodeon, bouzouki, guitar and flute.

For those who wanted more



detailed information on history, construction or performance techniques, Samuel Palmer and Susanne Palmer presented lectures and seminars on the instrument, in the main teaching room of the Centre.

A most enjoyable afternoon, with generous supplies of wine, mugs of tea, good music and warm sunshine. We wish the authors and the publishers every success with the book published by David and Charles: 250 pages, including playing and maintenance techniques: £15.00 net in UK.

Radio Folk

It's good to see local radio stations playing an increasing role in supporting live music. London's Capital Radio are going ahead with the second Capital Jazz Festival at Ally Pally, and now the BBC's Radio Sheffield are helping to promote the three-day South

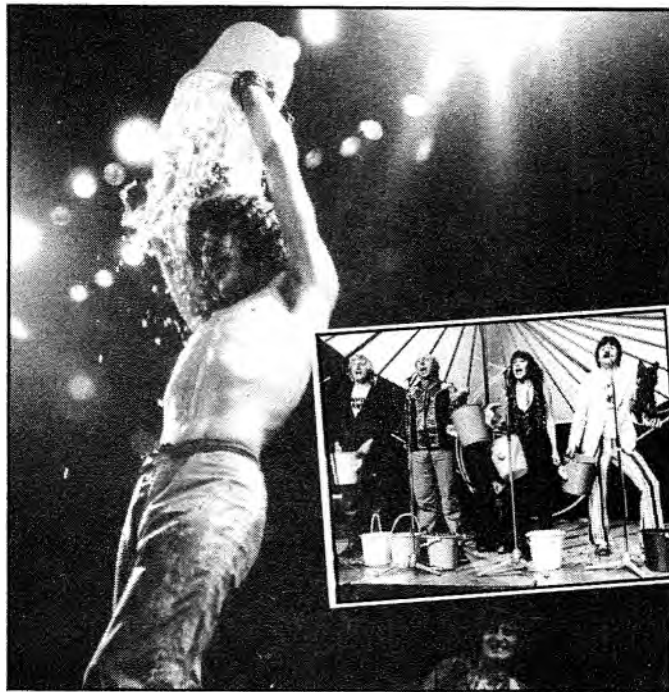
Yorkshire Folk Festival.

Topping the bill will be Irish singer and harp player Mary O'Hara, Mike Harding, and Richard and Linda Thompson. Other acts appearing at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre include Martin Simpson, as well as a selection of South Yorkshire talent such as Tony Capstick, Dave Burland, Steve Womack, John Leonard and John Squire, and John Chiswick.

BBC Radio Sheffield are co-organising the event with the Crucible Theatre, with support from South Yorkshire County Council. It takes place on July 18, 19 and 20.

Stolen combo

An Acoustic 125 2 x 12 combo was stolen from a car outside 68, Hawthorn Terrace, East Kilbride in May. The serial number is 5921B. If you see or hear of this combo knocking around, contact D. Hamill at the above address.



Tis' gone

What will become of Saturday mornings without Tiswas? Lucky viewers in the regions where Tiswas, the epic madcap serial for kids, was shown could thrill not only to the sight of Sally James in tight leather shirts, but also to some of the most entertaining and varied rock videos and appearances by some of the notable names around:

Programmes featured Joe Jackson, Pretenders, Genesis,

Tourists, Herbie Flowers from Sky, Rick Parfitt of Quo and who can forget the sight of Cozy Powell being out-drummed by a diminutive drummer, all of nine years old!

Ah well. Back to Superman and Chopper Squad. Devoted fans may be interested in our scoop photograph of Mick Jagger rehearsing his "Bucket of Water Song" number for the next Stones album.



Rodford Rocks St Albans

As if touring the world with the Kinks and writing for IM&RW wasn't enough, bass ace Jim Rodford has managed to find time to promote a regular music venue in his home town of St Albans.

Based at the Adelaide Wine House in Adelaide Street, Jim runs two music nights there on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Tuesday is devoted to R&B and blues, while Thursdays are reserved for straight jazz of the more traditional variety.

Jim is aiming to create interest in the St Albans music scene, so he mixes well known "names" with local bands. Recent faces have included Bob Henrit, Mike Cotton and Rod Argent while the jazz night has attracted members of both Acker Bilk's and Terry Lightfoot's bands.

Admission is just £1 and the club stays open until about 2a.m., real ale is also served. So why not help Jim to Keep Music Live by popping down there (you may even catch the gov'nor testing some gear for IM&RW).

State Control

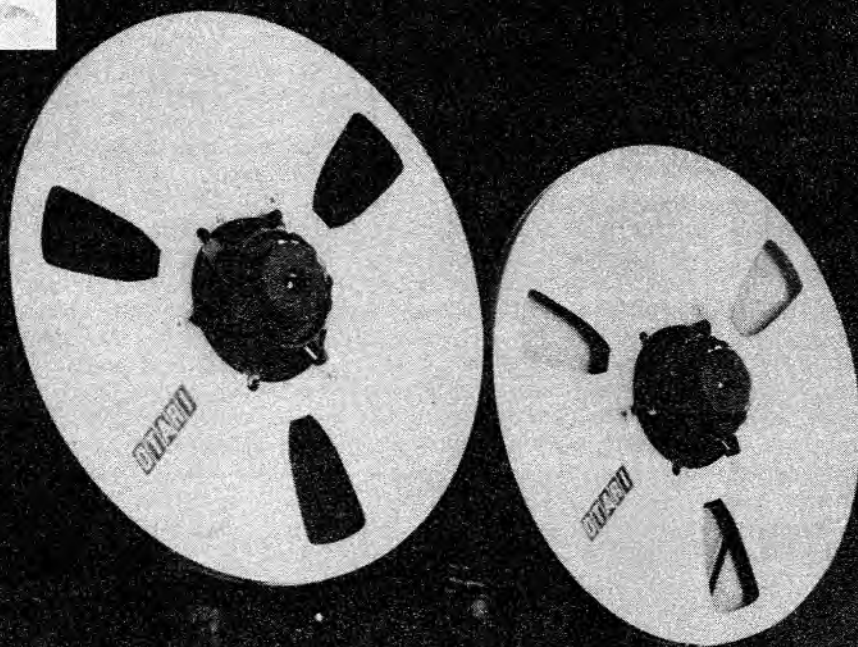
The South African government have seen fit recently to ban sales of Floyd's *The Wall* album as well as the single "Another Brick in the Wall" after several successful months at the top of the charts there.

Apparently coloured school-children have been chanting "We don't need no education, we don't need no state control" during current protests and this has put the Afrikaners into a fit of paranoia. We can't wait for the Gang of Four to start touring there...



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*Peter Houghton, Owner, Gooseberry Studios 1 & 2.**



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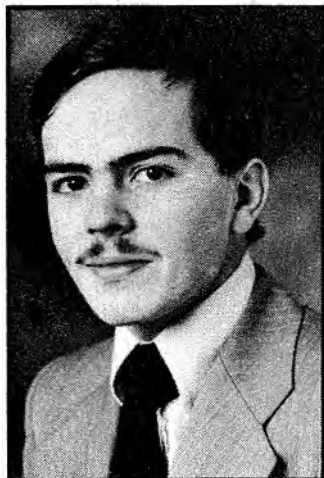
* Gooseberry 2 London, 1000 sq. ft. Cost £100,000. Equipment includes Otari MTR90, 24 track with auto locator. 3 Otari MX5050B stereo recorders. Soundcraft 32 x 24 console. Eventide harmonizer. Lexicon 224 computer reverb. Tannoy monitors. AKG and Neumann microphones. Rates from £24.00 per hour.

TRADE NEWS

Changes at Rosetti

Alby Paynter, the new Managing Director of Rosetti has announced the appointment, from within the company, of the following: Asst. Sales Managers — Trevor Newman, responsible for all Space Advertising and Mighty Mite; Jim Porter, with special responsibility for the Rosetti catalogue, and Ken Hinton in charge of all internal working of the sales office and warehouse, a specialist in drums and more stock knowledge than anyone!

Shipping Department Manageress is Phyllis Brock, formerly PA to Alby Paynter. All have been with Rosetti for many years and Alby commented, "With their enthusiasm and Rosetti's well-known service, we can forge even stronger links with our customers".



Simon Chapman

New Appointment for Zildjian

Eddie Haynes is pleased to announce the appointment of Simon Chapman, as his new Promotions Assistant for the Zildjian Export market.

Simon has already spent four years playing drums, in jazz and rock music and has previously specialised in selling hi-fi and stereo equipment. He left college at 18 having studied A level, Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry.

Simon's initial duties with Zildjian will include drummer and dealer liaison and other promotional work. He will be working from the office of Cymbals and Percussion (UK) Ltd, 68 Swithland Lane, Rothley, Leicester. Tel: (0533) 303184, (0533) 303290.

Stentor's Touch Wood

During the last decade there has been a great increase in the number of professional luthiers and specialist repair workshops in Britain. Stentor's range of tonewoods and tools has expanded to meet this demand currently taking up nine columns of the general price list. There are, however, a few makers who are also retailers and only two general music shops who stock a range of tonewoods for the amateur maker.

A new company with the appropriate name of Touchstone Tonewoods Limited, managed by Dave Carroll, has therefore been set up to take over Stentor's tonewood supplies. It will operate from shop premises in Lesbourne Road, Reigate, serving all makers and repairers. The shop will not sell any instruments or accessories and all such enquiries will be referred to Stentor's retail customers.

Although tonewoods will disappear from the Stentor catalogue, all supplies needed for retail servicing departments will be an important part of the new Stentor Main Catalogue, which is now nearing completion.

For the uninitiated, "tonewoods" covers all timbers such as spruce, pine, maple, rosewood, ebony, mahogany etc., which is specially sawn, seasoned and selected for its tonal qualities and suitability for musical instruments. Other supplies include glues, mother-of-pearl, abalone, fretwire, rosettes, bridges, varnishes, purfling, soundposts and many special tools for violin and guitar makers.

Datanomics and EMS

Datanomics Ltd of Westminster Road, Wareham, Dorset have recently acquired the sole manufacturing rights to all EMS (Manufacturing) Ltd and EMS (London) Ltd equipment.

Manufacture has already commenced in the new premises, under the direction of Alex Miller, who was a member of the original EMS team. The full EMS range of synthesizers is being continued, with particular emphasis on the AKS, Vocoder

and Polysynthi, as well as the educational models.

The research and development is continuing and involves the use of the latest micro-chip and computer-aided technology. Distribution of the equipment is generally being handled by Mick Johnson Music, 227 Putney Bridge Road, London SW15.

Datanomics Ltd are presently developing other items of on-stage equipment, including live performance mixers and sophisticated output PA systems, and are also able to supply this, and EMS equipment, on rental terms. All rental, repair and spares enquiries should be directed to the factory (Tel: Wareham (09295) 6311).



Saxon Using Hohner EFX

Lead guitarist Graham Oliver of the fast rising Heavy Metal band, Saxon, recently took delivery of a complete set of Hohner HFX effect units from Sheffield dealers, Musical Sounds.

He will be using them on stage and in the studio proving that the heavy metal construction of the units is just right for the Heavy Metal music revival his band are currently heading.

Ludwig: To UK Dealer For 1979

Rose Morris recently presented Gig Sounds of Streatham with the Ludwig "Dealer of the Year" award. Eric Lindsay, manager of Gig Sounds, and his salesman, John Blunt, won the award for their outstanding sales back up service of Ludwig drum outfits during 1979.

Both salesmen have been in the music business for many years. Eric was a professional guitarist for seven years, moving on to a very successful career in the retail side of business. John has been playing Ludwig drums for over 12

years — his career has included a spell as drummer with the Searchers. Eric was presented with his prize — a Korg Guitar Synth (at his request) — by Ed Able, Vice-President Manufacturing, of Ludwig. He also enjoyed a night at Ronnie Scott's in the company of Roy Forder, Sales Manager of Rose Morris.

Two Audio/Video Synchronisers for LWT

London Weekend Television Ltd, has recently placed an order for two SMPTE/EBU Q-lock 210 audio/video synchronisers from 3M. This machine is exceptional in that it is capable of interfacing with virtually any professional audio/video recorder. Other noticeable features includes 10 auto-locate memory positions for master and/or slave, and a self-contained time code generator (any standard).

The synchroniser requires no modifications to either audio or video recorders used for master or slave machines.

Further information can be obtained from 3MK UK Ltd on Bracknell (0344) 58445 (John Prigmore).

Silver-Eagle Goes World-Wide

Following their attendance at the International Music Trade Fair in Frankfurt, Silver-Eagle designs have carried out the most successful appointment of new distributors in the company's history.

The company manufactures and markets the Tres Amigos wood care products, Doctor Song Leather-Like Guitar Straps and the widely-known "Pick-Pocket" Genuine Leather & Fabric Instrument Straps and Accessories. Their complete catalogue of products will be exclusively represented throughout the UK, Scotland and Ireland by Rosetti (EMI) Ltd of London.

Other countries where distribution has been established include Japan, France, Germany, Argentina, Italy, Finland, Norway and the Benelux Countries.

Fender Competition

Would readers please note that the closing date for the Fender Competition which ran in the March, April and May issues of IM&RW, is July 14.

ALBUMS

McCartney

McCartney II
Parlophone

This album more or less follows on in the same vein as McCartney's first two solo ventures in the early Seventies. It is a solo album in every sense of the word, for the man sings, plays and writes everything. In fact he has even dispensed with a studio and has recorded everything at home by simply plugging the mikes directly into a 16-track Studer.



As with *McCartney I* and *Ram* the tracks are a complete mixture of various musical styles, there are straight rockers, love songs and various bits of whimsical indulgence. And once again, as with those early albums, the results are somewhat patchy.

The opening track "Coming Up" will always conjure up memories of that fantastic video which accompanied it on *Top of the Pops* and various other shows. Other typical McCartney pop comes in the shape of "Temporary Secretary" and "One of These Days".

As if to emphasize the basic nature of the recording situation, a couple of excellent rockers are included. "On The Way" contains Neolithic drums and bass compete with echoey vocals and wailing guitar. With Lennon-type vocals it sounds like a jam from an early Beatles session.

The one thing McCartney excels at is plaintive ballads. You will not find a better example than "Waterfalls" which finds him at his most plaintive accompanied only by electric

piano and acoustic guitar.

The album also includes a couple of instruments, one of which, "Frozen Jap", is my favourite cut. Once again McCartney uses basic instrumentation, getting an oriental flavour from his synth backed up by metronomic drums.

Overall not a great album, I can do without tracks like "Temporary Secretary" and "Bogey Music", but nevertheless an interesting one.

David Lawrenson

Engineered and composed by Paul McCartney.
Technical assistance, Eddie Klein

Billy Cobham

Best Of... Billy Cobham,
(CBS)

Return To Forever (CBS),
Mahavishnu Orchestra (CBS)

The Cobham and Return To Forever albums should be retitled "The Worst Of...". All of Cobham's best work was with the Mahavishnu Orchestra, when he was playing with musicians of the same high calibre and under the discipline of John McLaughlin. Outside of this context Cobham has proved that he certainly ain't no leader — and he ain't got much taste either. His "Best Of" album consists of mediocre disco and cliched fusion. Yawn.

Unfortunately for CBS the real "Best Of RTF" is on other labels, namely ECM and Polydor. The crystalline first album on ECM and "Light As A Feather" by the initial incarnation of RTF (Joe Farrell on soprano and flute, Flora Purim, vocals, Airto Moreira on drums, Stanley Clarke on acoustic bass, and of course Chick Corea on electric piano) still stand as masterpieces. The best albums produced by the



post-Mahavishnu rock orientated RTF, "Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy" and "Where Have I Known You Before?", are not represented here. The music CBS have been left with is superficial and showy, jazz-rock for your parents to tap their toes to.

And now for some real music. The Mahavishnu Orchestra kept the 'inner mounting flame' alive in the otherwise boring mid-Seventies, an almost unbearably intense band that astonished a whole generation of musicians. The trouble with this compilation is that the band has left behind such a rich legacy that inevitably many deserving tracks are left out. The cuts here are fairly representative (e.g., "Birds of Fire", "Meeting of the Spirits", "Lila's Dance"), except there is nothing from the final album, "Inner Worlds", a major omission.

Another problem with an album like this is that each of the original albums had a flavour and atmosphere of its own, which is destroyed by picking out odd tracks here and there. Do yourself a favour and go and buy the original records.

Incidentally, CBS, the track listed on both album and sleeve as "Be Happy" is in fact "Earth Ship". Wake up.

Lynden Barber

Graham Parker

The Best of Graham Parker
and the Rumour (Vertigo)

There's one good thing about artists changing labels, and that is the usual compilation album from the outgoing record company. Now I know that most fans will have the tracks already, nevertheless many "Greatest Hits" or "Best of..." collections have a habit of excluding vital material.

I am happy to report that this Graham Parker compilation is not one. Everything you expect is here from the definitive Parker of "Soul Shoes" to the classic "Hold Back The Night". It is worth the money for these two and "White Honey", "Hotel Chambermaid" and "Hey Lord Don't Ask Me Questions" on

their own, but there are 10 other tracks as well.

David Lawrenson

The Cure

Seventeen Seconds (Fiction)

This record is sad — sad because the Cure have so much potential that just hasn't been captured on record. Their first album was bleak and empty, bar a fast and furious version of Hendrix's "Foxy Lady", but on stage they sounded a different band. Robert Smith's guitar came across forcefully, a vehicle which showed his songs to best advantage.

Instead of trying to capture their live sound on vinyl they have opted for carrying the paring down process even further on their second album.

The result is a record that is as cold as a dead dog, and which sounds like it was recorded in a laboratory rather than a recording studio. It's an attempt at a "mood" album, but with a couple of exceptions the only mood induced is boredom. I have a suspicion that drummer Lol Tolhurst is really a drum machine — he doesn't deviate from a strict beat throughout.

The high points are "A Forest", also released as a single, with its softly menacing undercurrent, and "At Night", based around a doomy bass riff, subtle use of synth and a Joy Division drum sound.

Lynden Barber

Produced by Robert Smith and Mike Hedges, assisted by Chris Parry and MLS.

Engineered by Mike Hedges and Mike Dutton, assisted by Nigel Green and Andrew Warwick.

Recorded at Morgan Studio One

Brand X

Do They Hurt (Charisma)

Despite some loony ramblings on the sleeve notes by Michael Palin and a first track title of "Noddy Goes to Sweden" Brand X have pro-

duced another fine album that should be considered *seriously*.

The line-up varies between various combinations of Jones, Goodsall, Robinson, Lumley, Clarke, Giblin, and Phil Collins successfully intermeshing on a more digestible offering than we have come to expect. My choice cuts — "Cambodia" (no prizes for guessing who was a major guitar influence on John Goodsall) and "D.M.Z.", a Percy Jones composition.

Mr Jones excels with his amazing virtuoso style of bass playing on this album demonstrating to all and sundry how to play jazz bass in a decisive manner that defies his casual stance.

I have never understood why Brand X can't realise greater popularity in their native UK than in the States but my soul is satisfied by the fact that the colonials are getting a good education. Let's wean them off a diet of FM Radio-Brek onto a strict diet of one of the best jazz-rock bands in the world.

Mike Feasey

Grateful Dead

Go to Heaven (Arista)

What? Still alive? Aren't they the crazy guys who did the Cheops gig? Yes, 'fraid so kids. This strangely over-produced Dead, far removed from the country acid rock of my memory is a distinctly different band of pranksters who produced my favourite album — *Mars Hotel*. (So memorable for "relaxing at home" with, as we say in the office.) The front cover sports our laid-back

friends in celestial white suits *a-la-Bee Gees* and on the back cover Stanley Mouse displays what must be his most restrained illustration ever in the Mouse & Kelly era of popular memory.

Inside, Messrs Garcia *et al* have woven a rather formulated contribution in their now, some would say, almost sentimental studio mode.

Side two is preferable to my tastes and harbours an underlying Feat-meets-Steely Dan style in "Easy to Love You". The writing combination of Weir and Barlow works best on "Lost Sailor" and "Saint of Circumstance" but the overall "feel" of the album is weary and lacks bite and the emotive ambience that makes a reasonably pleasant collection of songs into a *memorable* one in today's saturated market. If only Lowell were alive... One for Dead Heads and students of mass acceptability. OK, lads, back to your sarcophagi!

Mike Feasey

Devo

Freedom of Choice (Virgin)

New wave smartass pop. Actually, not so smartass. Is this really the same group that made your brain feel it was being sliced in two on "Satisfaction"? Can men who pose on album sleeves in plastic flowerpot hats be serious? Why am I listening to this boring son-of-Buggles plastic pop?

Actually there are a few worthwhile tracks, notably "Girl U Want" ("My Sharona" part



two?), "Gates of Steel", and the title track with its thundering tom-toms, which is a bit of a classic. The rest is instantly forgettable, bar a few pleasant synth noises here and there. And now for this month's pop poser: when will Devo be joining Yes?

Lynden Barber
Produced by Devo and
Robert Margouleff, engineered
by Robert Margouleff and
Howard Siegal, assistant
engineer Karat Faye.
Recorded at the
Record Plant, Los Angeles

Keith Jarrett

Nude Ants (ECM)

Like many double albums, this would work far better as a single album. Recorded live at the Village Vanguard in New York with Jarrett's European group, it can be divided into "eastern" and "western" musical zones. In short, the "western" pieces suck, and the "eastern" sections show why Jarrett has built up a towering reputation as one of contemporary music's leading improvisers.

To start with the bad, side one's "Chant of the Soil" is a lazy, wooden attempt at funk. Drummer Jon Christensen and bassist Palle Danielsson are just not capable of this kind of material, and Jan Garbarek's cold soprano tone is totally unsuitable. The track, which steers dangerously close to fusion muzack, would be too long at five minutes, let alone its actual playing time of 17 minutes. Side four is the other hard crust that surrounds a sandwich of goodies. "New Dance" is a sort of half-baked Latin American-a-go-go, like Edmundo Ros on downers.

The long tracks "Processional" and "Oasis" on sides two and three stand comparison with the best of Jarrett's recorded work. In structure they have more in common with his solo piano work than previous group records, being based around his improvisations rather than compositions. He makes great play of his trademark of simple, hammered out ostinato figures in the left hand that act as a backdrop for improvisation in his right hand and, in this case, Garbarek's saxophone. In one remarkable section Jarrett builds up a raga-like pattern against Christensen's demonic crash cymbal work and Garbarek's nasal Baghdad market-toned soprano. The whole atmosphere of these sides is oriental, with "Oasis" building up into a Terry Riley-like trance towards the end.

Towards is another good reason for braving the album's dross — the beautiful, relaxed "Innocence" at the end of side one. It serves as a reminder that Jarrett is capable of being an inspired composer as well as an effortlessly creative improviser.

Lynden Barber
Recorded live at the Village
Vanguard, NY, May '79
Produced by Manfred Eicher,
engineered by Tom McKenney
and mixing engineer
Martin Wieland

Jack de Johnette

Special Edition (ECM)

This record represents some of the healthiest currents in contemporary jazz — namely a free spirit combined with a deep respect for the music's traditions. De Johnette is the

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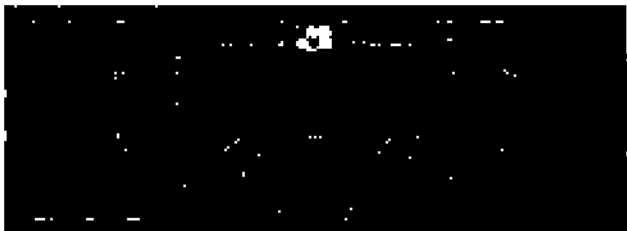
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continued from page 33
perfect leader, his understated drumming coaxing and suggesting rather than coercing soloists David Murray and Arthur Blythe, both of whose playing here is often hair-raising.

The ghost of Eric Dolphy is to be found lurking in the grooves, thanks to Blythe and

Murray, whose serpentine alto and bass clarinet twist and turn in typical Dolphyesque fashion. One track is in fact called "One For Eric" and the group also performs Coltrane's "India", which Dolphy has performed on.

The long track "Zoot Suite" (dedicated to Zoot Sims?) features a swinging theme

reminiscent of Dizzy Gillespie's "Blue 'n' Boogie" and simple reflective passages that include some melodic bowed cello from Peter Warren, otherwise to be heard on bass.

This is a highly emotional album. Who said ECM were a coffee table label?

Lynden Barber

Blondie-Gary Numan

Eat To The Beat Blondie
Gary Numan

It's disturbing to see so little creativity injected into what could be a rich and fruitful combination — Blondie and the video medium. I don't know about you, but I've always regarded Blondie as one of the more intellectual outfits extant in the rock world today, so it was disappointing to see that the *Eat To The Beat* Video Show is just like a string of Top Of The Pops clips tacked together. The target that should be aimed for by video producers is rather the best of The Old Grey Whistle Test — what springs to mind is the highly impressive "Accidents Will Happen" animation by Elvis Costello.

Eat To The Beat features the band in every clip, and therefore becomes just a little dull, and that's only on first viewing. I'd hate to be faced with the prospect of having to watch the tape once a week merely to justify a £30 investment. A little experimentation by Jon Roseman, the producer, wouldn't have gone amiss, but we must bear in mind the fact that marketing men may have wielded their influence and insisted on tameness in order to satisfy the international gloom market.

Aside from this criticism, the tape is expertly put together with nary a join showing and the production company has resisted the temptation to sling one effect after another at the viewer.

Unlike the Gary Numan video, in which the watcher is constantly kept disoriented with tricks attained through the use of the Squeezeflex device. Perhaps this is to take attention away from the music. At first Numan's pleasant voice isn't so bad, and the *Cars* clip is exceedingly flash and entertaining. But during the rest of the tape, which features highlights of his Hammersmith gig last September, it becomes depressingly clear that Numan's vocal range, musical vision and musicianship is painfully limited.

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film a delight to behold — it looks as if he's taken every artifice possible and stirred it into the final mix, to great effect. A man after my own heart. It's a pity Numan's talent doesn't rise to the occasion. Though to be fair, he can create a kind of post-apocalyptic future zone wierd-out ambience, if you happen to be in the right mood.

The Numan tape is already on sale — VHS and Betamax cassettes costing £19.99 with U-matic and Phillips retailing at £29.99. Mail order only from Beggar's Banquet, 8 Hogarth Road, London, SW5.

For undisclosed reasons the Blondie tape has yet to be released, through it was due out in Spring. The video has been made by Chrysalis in conjunction with Alive Video Ltd, and will be available on the Sony systems and Betamax only. Late August should see the tape commercially available, at a special price of £19.99 due to sponsorship by Sony for the first three months. After this period the price will rise to £29.99.

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Stephen Brennan



Photo: Carol Freedman

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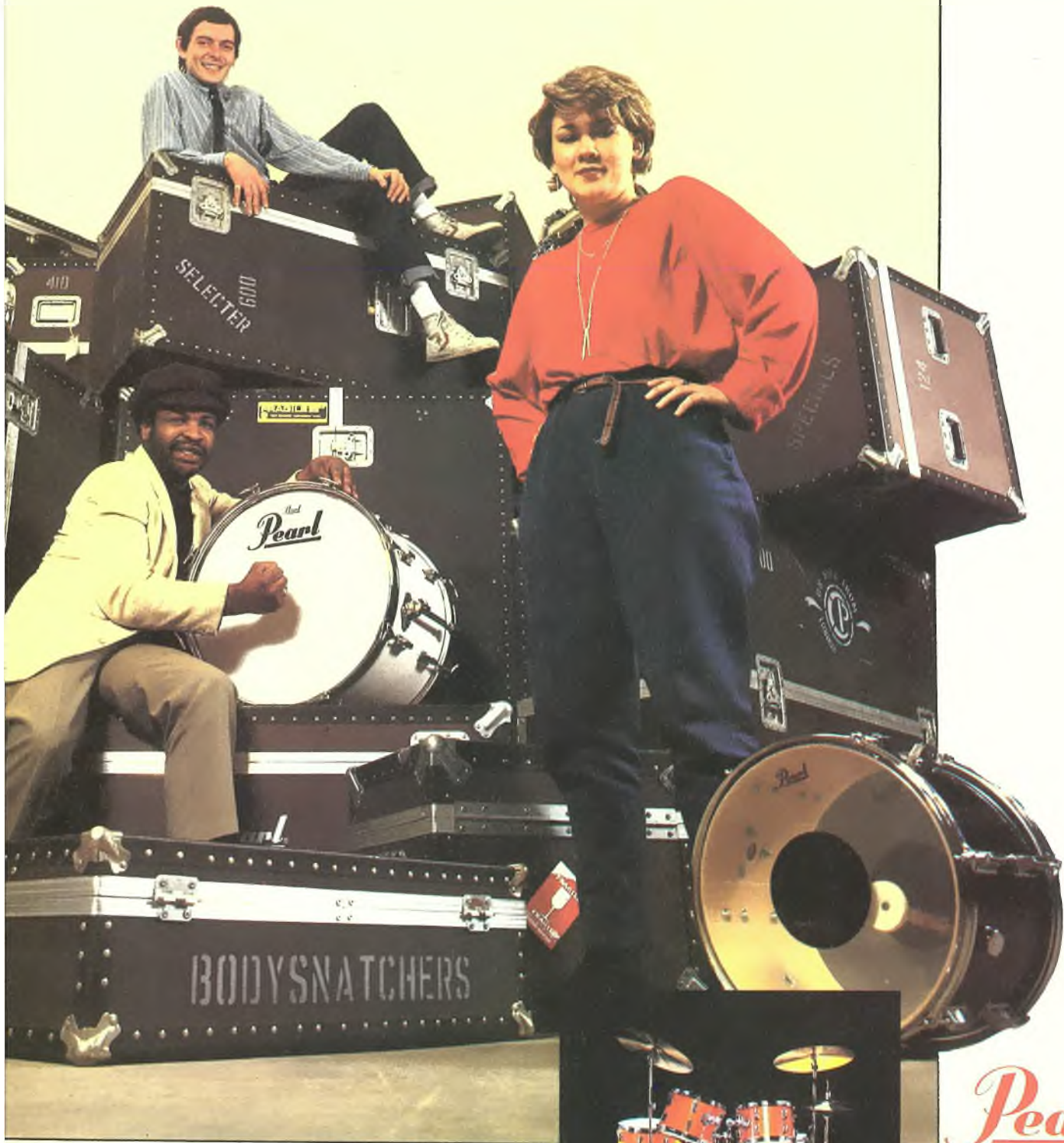
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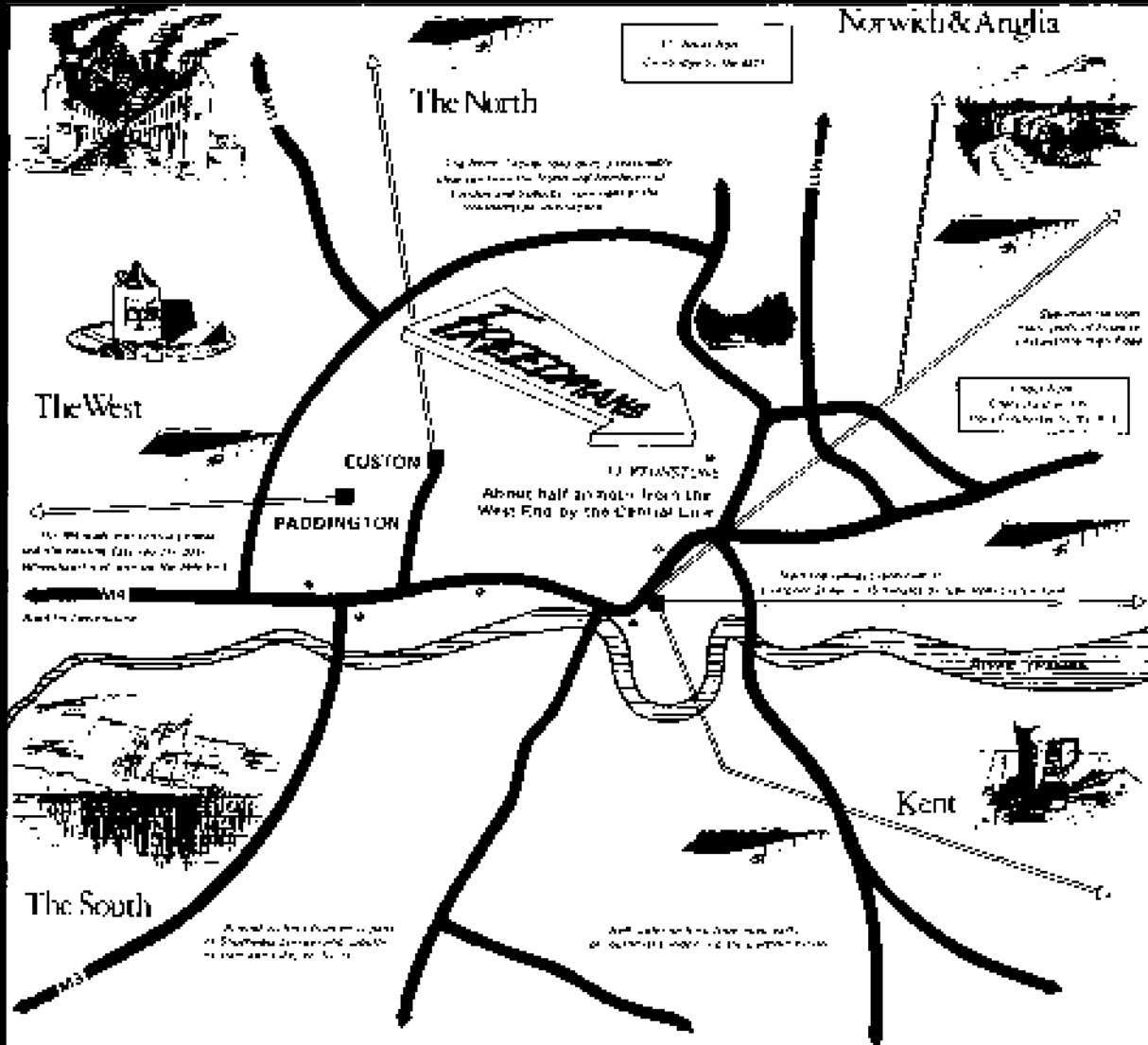
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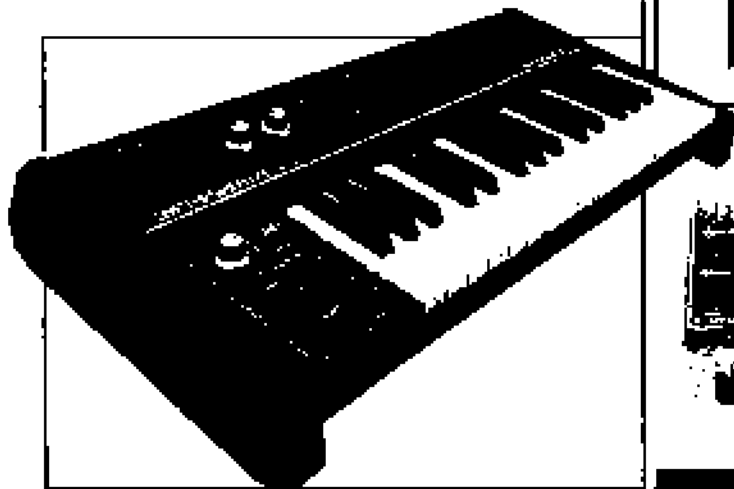
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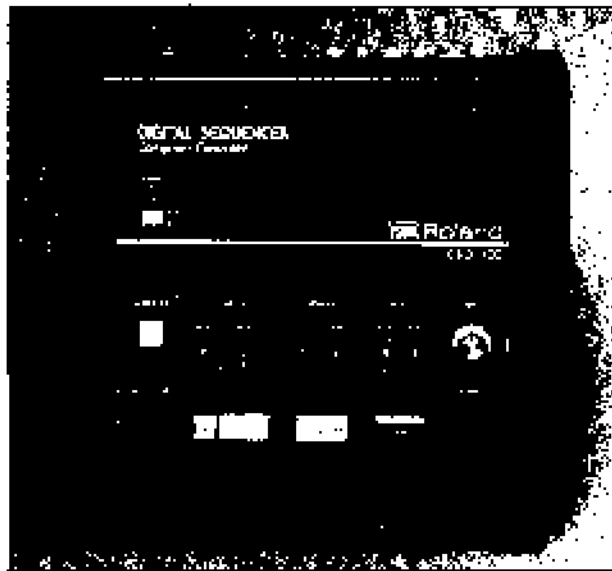
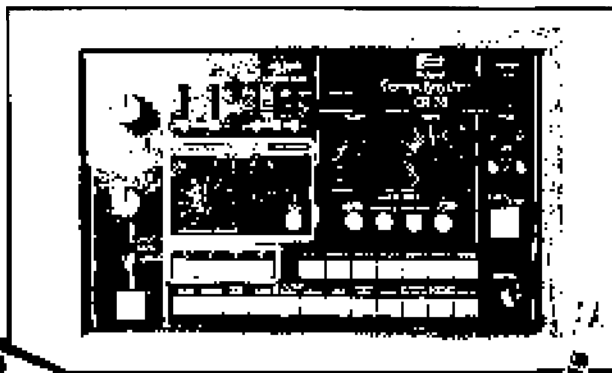
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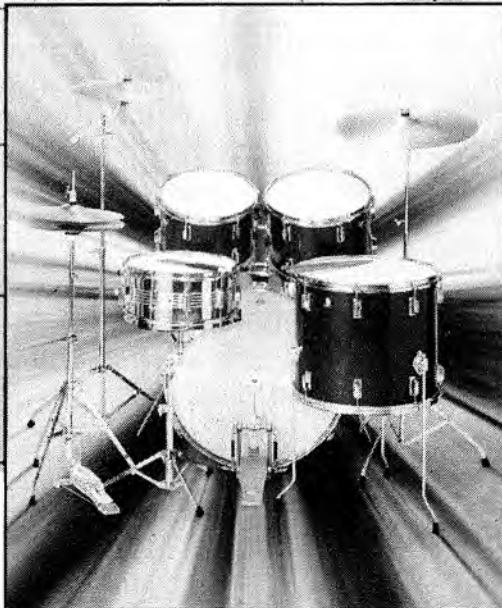
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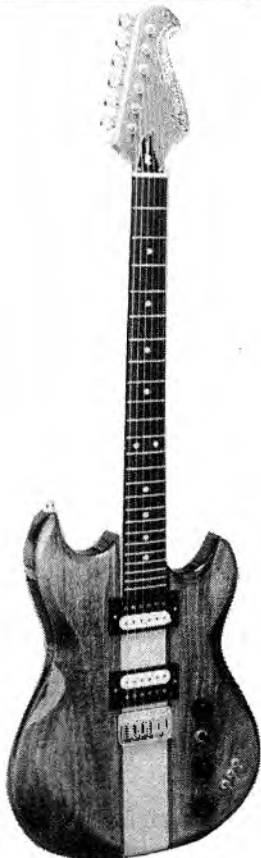
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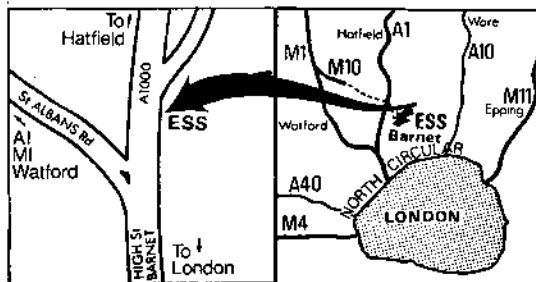
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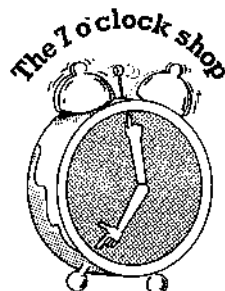
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TWO MEMBERS



**HOLD
THEIR
OWN**

Less than 18 months after they burst upon the national consciousness with "The Sound Of The Suburbs", The Members find themselves in the unfortunate position of having to restart the long haul to a wider public almost from scratch. Since the band in question offer a sublime blend of sophistication and power, dealing wittily with a variety of subjects and using reggae elements rather than aping them, I can only think that their last autumn's world tour and a period of concentrated recording in early 1980 are responsible.

Last year's debut album, *At The Chelsea Nightclub*, must have surprised even their staunchest fans with its quality, while "Offshore Banking Business", the inspired reggae follow-up to "Suburbs", was the kind of mini-hit that people remember far longer than many mediocre top-toppers. Now 1980 — *The Choice Is Yours* skims blithely over the usual second album traumas, proving at least as subtle and intriguing as its predecessor. (Sales so far have suffered from the various playlists' refusal to bite on the excellent single, "Romance".) Since The Members' arrangements are invariably put together with obvious care, I sought illumination on the nuts and bolts of the process from their very different guitarists, Jean Marie Carroll (alias JC) and Nigel Bennett. I wasn't disappointed.

When we first met, JC, you said you more or less learnt the instrument as you went along. Is that an exaggeration?

JC: I have learnt an awful lot since I've been in The Members. I hadn't played in any other band... I'd messed around with an acoustic guitar.

You were pretty proficient when you joined, weren't you, Nigel?

NB: I suppose so. I'd hardly played in any bands — just school bands and knocking around with a few other people.

Unless JC's being overly modest, wasn't this gap between your techniques a problem?

NB: It wasn't at all, actually. I knew nothing about playing in a band which was gigging regularly.

JC: You learn a lot more when you start playing live, no matter how well you play in your bedroom. When Nigel joined the band (previous lead guitarist Gary Baker has a song on *Nightclub*) we needed somebody that was very proficient on the guitar.

The reggae input is mainly from JC out of you two, isn't it?

NB: JC has a more kind of *schlangy*, choppy kind of style which you'd associate with reggae. He listens to much more than me.

JC: We work it out. On a number on the new album like "Goodbye To The Job", we think well, obviously you can't really have reggae guitar in that. We

look at a song...for example, Nigel plays more or less all of "Flying Again": that's what his guitar style's suited to.

NB: And you're playing more or less all of "Clean Men" — but live we're both playing all the time.

Though denying the "Ritchie Blackmore" tag given him early on by *Sounds'* Gary Bushell, Nigel admits that he "used to listen to a lot of the old guitar heroes". A song like "Don't Push" certainly owes something to The Yardbirds' "Over Under Sideways Down", while "The Ayatollah Harmony" (the Bennett-composed instrumental which opens 1980) also contains hints of early Beck.

JC: That's the Burns tone...what we've gone for on the album is more English guitar tones than American guitar tones. American guitar tones are too standardized: you could classify it as a Gibson played through a Music Man amp."

NB: A band such as Boston seem to have this wall of sound which is much cleaner and precise. It's very sterile — compare that with somelike like Steve

...what we've gone for on the album is more English than American guitar tones

Jones of the Pistols' wall of sound: that I would say is quite an English one.

Has your equipment changed much since you started?

JC: I've always had the same amplifier which I bought when I first joined the band — a Fender Twin Reverb, which I think is a very good amplifier. A bit boring, saying "I've always used one" (laughs), but I have.

NB: "I had a WEM amplifier at school which blew up, then I had an HH Combo which I really didn't like at all. They seem to be quite popular, but I found it horrible — I only got it 'cos it was so portable. As soon as I could, I sold that and bought an old Marshall. I've been using Marshall every since. I use a Les

Paul guitar and a lot of people think *immediately*, if you've got a Les Paul and a Marshall you're gonna sound exactly like Thin Lizzy in tone, but there's so much variance on our album. I virtually use that combination on all the tracks and there's so much sound variance. You can get a lot out of those two.

What guitars have you tried?

JC: I started off with a Fender Music Master, which is very cheap — almost like a junior model. When we got a record deal I bought myself an adult one — a Jazz Master — and I played that for a long time. Then we went to America and I played a Stratocaster all the time we were there. That was great and I had it stolen, which is a warning to any musicians at Los Angeles airport: never undertip the porter, 'cos he's likely just to leave all your guitars in the middle of the airport. We were in New Zealand and the next day — no guitars. Luckily, five turned up on the next flight (out of six). We're still trying to get the money out of Pan-Am. When we got to New Zealand, they don't hire guitars out — we had to advertise on the radio.

NB: I initially bought that guitar — the Strat — and then I found I didn't really like it and so JC started using it and loved it.

JC: The first four nights in Australia it was the same — I'd find someone in the town with a Stratocaster and borrow that. They really varied, which put me off because I'd had this great one. So I eventually came back to England and decided for a change of tone and bought a Rickenbacker, which I think is a really good '60's-type sound.

With the tour taking in Canada as well, did you find any problems with transporting guitars?

NB: We bought good strong flight cases ages ago, which were a good investment.

JC: In Australia we had to change the strings more or less every day, 'cos they literally rotted...heat, humidity and sweat from the gigs. If you didn't wipe them immediately you came off stage they literally rusted away.

NB: The guitar was wet every night, really wet — like someone had thrown water on it.

JC: If you're in somewhere like Brisbane, which is really a tropical area, you'll be playing live there with the lights — they insist you have to have a full light show. Absolutely ludicrous."

Have you evolved a definite preference for certain strings?

NB: I've always liked D'Addario strings. They're cheap and they're as good as any I've ever found — I've been through them all recently.

JC: I always use Rotosound strings, but there's some American ones — which are again D'Addario — called Light Tops and Heavy Bottoms. which



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NB: On the last album we had a great engineer called John Brown who was very meticulous in getting a good sound for both of us.

JC: We recorded the backing tracks in four days for 1980 — so you've got to go over every song while you're recording the backing tracks and think "Right, now this is a different type of song again. How are we gonna alter the sound?" A lot of people put albums down with more or less the same guitar sound throughout, which can give you a continuous sound, but never makes any tracks really stand out."

NB: Sure. I bought a great new pedal today: MXR Compressor. I only use like, one for solos, to boost it up. I'm really excited 'cos I'm gonna try it out tonight. I've had so much trouble with pedals for ages — most of them, as soon as you click it on it distorts the sound as well, makes it kind of fuzzy like a cheap pre-amp.

Do you pay much attention to lyrics when you're deciding what to play?

JC: Usually the writer of the song explains to the group what the song's about and what the vibe is — it sounds a very old-fashioned word, but it's a word you use quite a lot in the studio — what the feel to the song should be like. We argue it out, basically.

NB: You can't just play with a backing track, without knowing what it's all about.

JC: Some people do.

NB: I suppose so. Personally, I'm very conscious of the lyrics.

JC: We record most of the overdubs after the vocal, so you've got a basic backing track, you put a vocal on it and then you look at the song and say "Now what parts of the words constitute a climax?" and bring about a musical climax at the same time.

The arrangement of Larry Wallis' "Police Car" (where the vehicle becomes a symbol of the Old Bill's less attractive side) is very much related to the words. . .

JC: Especially some of the guitar work Nigel does on that. We used this harmonizer on the guitar. . . a lot of the things Nigel did on it wasn't in fact what you'd call traditional guitar playing, but making a threatening noise. You could be really obvious and go (imitates police siren) all the way through. . .

NB: It's a more eerie, kind of squeaky noise.

Both cite Adrian Belew, guitarist on David Bowie's Stage, as an example of the kind of approach they admire.

JC: I wouldn't call it free-form guitar,



'cos it's very disciplined. . .

NB: . . . using a very broad range of the instrument, really thinking a lot about all the different possibilities you can get out of it.

JC: Feedback is a prime example. Nigel plays several tunes in feedback on "Physical Love" on the album. It's worked out by running round. . .

NB: Yeah. Just turn the amp up bloody loud, so the thing's going to feed back as soon as I take my hands off the strings. By turning your body inside the studio, it picks up on different frequencies and makes different notes. I just have to learn which way to move.

JC: It's almost like "choreograph yourself".

Electric and acoustic guitars are totally different instruments, aren't they? There's hardly any relation.

JC: There is hardly any relation, but a lot of guitarists these days — they've got guitar plus electricity, but there's a middle way which is not too distorted, almost like an organ, which is featured on a lot of records these days instead of an actual acoustic guitar being strummed. People think 'Oh, acoustic guitar's whatisname, Richard Digance' — they don't wanna sound like Richard Digance and they don't wanna sound like Jimi Hendrix, they wanna sound safe.

On the world tour, did you develop new things or was there a tendency to stick to what you knew?

NB: When you're doing nine weeks on the trot, unfortunately towards the end of that time you are doing a show like some kind of recital.

JC: We did change the numbers, because you can't play a number exactly the same for the rest of your life. It does something to you if you have to play 'Sound Of The Suburbs' exactly the same every night, even if you just change the rhythm. . . without disappointing the fans, of course.

Did the way you played together alter?

JC: It's only in the last nine months

that we've actually got together and collaborated properly. Usually, it was just him standing on his side of the stage and me standing on my side of the stage — we knew we both had totally different sounds and 'Never the twain shall meet'.

NB: It's largely to do with equipment. For instance, in America every night it was a different PA and so sometimes you just can't hear what the fuck's going on at the other side of the stage, so how can you play with someone? These days we've got our back line sorted out, we know what kind of monitor sound we like and I from my side definitely do hear more band sound.

I was amused by your comments recently about the type of band for who the number of guitars is a status thing.

JC: They usually all sound the same, as well. We carry a spare guitar each on tour, but they're completely different-sounding guitars. Nigel's got an old SG which is his spare, I use a Rickenbacker with a Jaguar as a spare. There's no point in having two guitars that sound the same. I saw that group Def Leppard and I couldn't tell what was happening. It's just exactly the same sound coming out of either side of the stage, so it's just double-fatter when they're both playing rhythm. It doesn't give you any great variance.

Among The Members' ploys are brief interludes reminiscent of The Jonn Barry Seven, while "Romance" features a whiff of Hawaiian guitar. . . or does it?

NB: It was one of our road crew's Stratocaster flat on my knee. First of all I used a bottleneck and picked one line, then went over and did the harmonies to make it sound slightly Hawaiian — so it's just two takes.

There's also an intriguing, dobro-like flurry on "Frustrated, Bagshot" on the first album. . .

NB: It's slide acoustic.

JC: And I'm playing electric guitar in the background. Using acoustic guitar for a lead. . . can sound good.

And the collapsing "My Generation" guitar solo in "Nightclub" itself?

JC: I've always played that. There was always the typical guitarist getting completely carried away on the last number and fluffing it horribly. There's also the Bonzos' solo in "Canynons Of Your Mind" — after you listen to it a few times, it sounds completely right, but just completely going over the top. If somebody smashes a guitar on stage you wouldn't hear it on a recording — it doesn't sound like a guitar being smashed on stage. But if you play it really badly, or almost a free-form way, then it sounds like a guitar falling to pieces. I sometimes play "Don't Cry For Me Argentina" — in a different key — in that bit, just to break the boredom!

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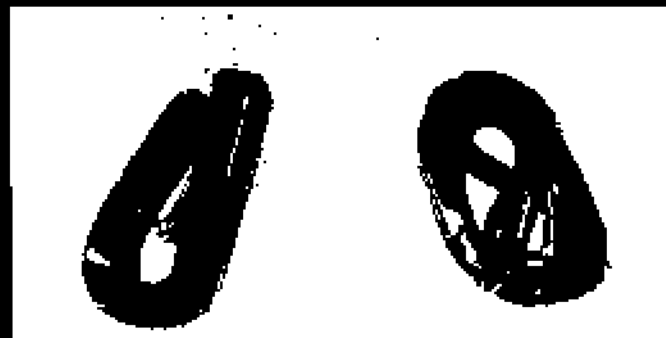
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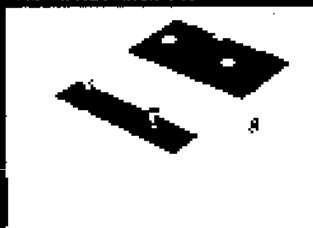
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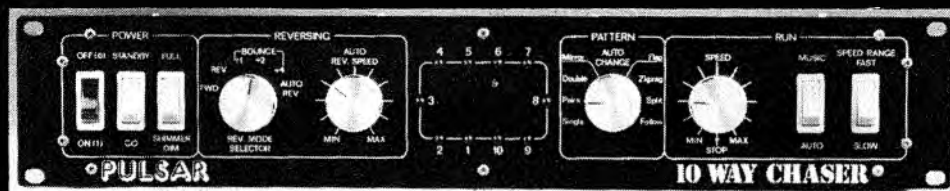


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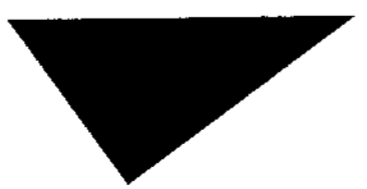


BY LYNDEN BARBER

FILE UNDER X



BRAND X



It all started in the late Sixties, when phrases like "breaking down the barriers" and "musical hybrid" were thrown about as freely as bog rolls at a football match. The barriers in question were those between jazz and rock and the idea of merging the two was considered fresh and exciting. A plethora of young English musicians, tired of the excesses of acid rock, decided to dig out their Mingus and Coltrane albums to pick up a few tips. If only they could marry the musicianship and imagination of jazz with the adrenalin of rock... these college types' minds boggled briefly before donning cool shades and diving into the rehearsal basement.

Saturday afternoons just wouldn't have been the same without the Soft Machine, augmented by the front line of Keith Tippett's group, blasting away for 20 minutes on the John Peel show (you were really cool if you liked bands that played non-stop for 20 minutes).

Meanwhile across the Atlantic, similar ideas were stirring. Miles Davis was preparing the ground with a whole string of albums — *Filles de Kilimanjaro*, *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*, the ultimate status symbol for sixth formers. The Tony Williams Lifetime decided to mix free jazz with electronic rock, with potentially explosive effect (they were largely ignored).

Then it happened. Ex-Miles and Tony Williams guitarist John McLaughlin got religion, formed a band of virtuoso musicians and called it the Mahavishnu Orchestra. The Second Wave of Jazz-Rock was born. Eight years later and the idea of a union between jazz and rock isn't so exciting. There's even an established name for it — "fusion". Many of the original innovators have burnt out — McLaughlin seems lost for new ideas, Cobham churns out cliched disco, Chick Corea produces mindless schmaltz and Miles Davis appears to have disappeared up his own back side.

But there are still a few exceptionally talented musicians around who strongly believe that the genre has some creative mileage left, and they're determined to prove it. Some of them regularly get together to form a loose venture called Brand X, and while believing in the positive aspects of the music are perfectly aware of the traps in front of them. As bass player Percy Jones says: "There's a lot of fusion bands over in America, some of them are so cliché ridden. There's a couple of radio stations in New York that play jazz-rock 50 per cent of the time. Some of it sounds like 'fuzak', it sounds really predictable. We try to get away from that, because that's one of the criticisms we get a lot, that jazz-rock is played out. It's not an unreasonable criticism, it's something we're very aware of."

And Peter Robinson, one of Brand X's two keyboard players: "Miles Davis made that breakthrough where you could play jazz tunes through that hard rock thing. It's very hard to keep on coming up with good tunes and present them in that way. Basically it's really masculine music. I wouldn't call it aggressive, it's athletic. There are some sweet things that have come out of it, but basically with the high energy jazz-rock with a lot of technique, generally dazzling the audience, there's a limit to how far that can go, there's not much intimacy. It's really important on stage to display to the audience that it's fun to play, rather than this guerilla warfare."

Brand X have shown on record that it is possible to escape the clichés. Much of their work has consisted of relaxed, atmospheric playing aimed at creating a certain mood — examples include the eerie "Nightmare Patrol" on *Livestock* and most of the second album, *Moroccan Roll*, recorded with heaps

of space echo — an area largely uncovered by their US counterparts. On the minus side, they are sometimes guilty of substituting flashy playing for ideas — "dazzling the audience" as Peter Robinson puts it — and pushing their techniques to the limit when the music doesn't demand it. The latest album *Do They Hurt* is a clear illustration of the strengths and drawbacks of jazz-rock in 1980. Many of the compositions are inspired and beautifully played, in particular "Voidarama" and "Act of Will", with synthesized vocal from Percy. But there are also passages of fast playing which shatter the mood that's been built up — or perhaps that's deliberate.

The idea of a band of world-class jazz-rock musicians, coming from Britain, at first seems ridiculous. After all, the major names that have defined the genre have been from the States, virtually all Miles Davis alumni... Tony Williams, Joe Zawinul, McLaughlin (British born but naturalised American), etc. etc. How can a British band possibly match them for musical pedigree?

It may come as a surprise therefore to hear that Peter Robinson had gigs with Stanley Clarke, Lenny White, and master Japanese percussionist Stomu Yamashta, before joining Brand X. And that Herbie Hancock is only one of a list of well respected musicians that drummer Mike Clarke has played with. The other members of Brand X have also spent more than a few years "paying their dues", as we say in the biz — but more of that later.

Brand X caught the public eye almost as soon as they started gigging due to their drummer being The Very Famous Phil Collins of Genesis. It was a definite advantage, once they'd thrown off the tag of being "Phil Collins' part-time band". The group was actually started as an Average White Band-type outfit by a singer called Phillip Spinelli and guitarist Pete Bonus, and initially made an album for Island Records which was scrapped. The original drummer, John Dillon, left for personal reasons and Phil Collins was called in on the recommendation of Island A&R men. John Goodsall recalls: "We tried out some really hot drummers, but Phil settled in straight away with Percy (Jones), the bass player, into a really tight thing just naturally. We eventually got the band together with Phil, Robin Lumley (on keyboards), Percy and me, and the four of us decided that the instrumental passages were a lot more fun. The other two guys started going more and more into commercial songs and we started going out more into improvisation."

The line-up of the group has constantly changed — not because of musical dissatisfaction, but because the idea behind Brand X is that of an informal group of musicians getting together to play for enjoyment rather than making money. Robin Lumley spends more time on producing these days, although he did play on a couple of tracks on their latest album *Do They Hurt* and gigged on their recent tour with Bill Bruford's band. Phil Collins also played on the same two tracks, although he doesn't have much time to play with the band now (see the feature on Genesis in the May 1980 issue of *IM&RW*).

Other members of Brand X have included drummers Chuck Burgi and Kenwood Denard, percussionist Morris Pert and bass player John Giblin. As current drummer Mike Clarke explains: "It's not like it's my gig, it's like when they want Phil they call Phil, when they feel like calling me they call me, and him and I have been kinda split level the last couple of years."

John had a pretty far sighted Mum and Dad. At the age of seven, when most kids were playing with their Meccano sets and Scalectrix, the young Goodsall was given a guitar — a Rosetti Lucky Seven semi-acoustic, to be precise. Our John just picked the thing up and knocked out "Telstar" by the Tornados and "Apache" by the Shadows, and you could say that since then he has never looked back. He left school at about the age of 16 or 17 to play with a band called Babylon, with Carol Grimes on vocals and Tommy Ayres on keyboards, and then went on to join Alan Bown, gigging around tiny clubs and halls seven nights a week. "It was interesting, those bands were playing jazz-rock kind of fusion," says Goodsall. "It was soul riffs but sometimes it would get heavy and there would be horn players and stuff."

Life on the road continued with Atomic Rooster, with Vincent Crane on "heavy metal organ" and Rick Parnell on drums, where John started "getting into the more legato sound, screaming sustain and feedback." He met the founder members of Brand X after that when he hung around in London playing with people in pubs.

He had been listening to people like Sly Stone, Jimi Hendrix and Jimmy Page, and jazz artists like Coltrane, Charlie Parker and the Charles Lloyd Quartet (which included the young Keith Jarrett), but the real musical turning point came when he heard John McLaughlin. "I'd heard him with Miles Davis on *Bitches Brew*, but it was *Live Evil* that killed me, and *Inner Mounting Flame*, where I was really frightened by what I was hearing," says Goodsall. "It wasn't humanly possible, I was really worried. I'd be staring at the speaker wondering what was coming out of it, I was really quite scared." McLaughlin is still the most obvious influence to be detected in his guitar playing, and in his compositions — the track "Cambodia" on *Do They Hurt* is heavily based on the Mahavishnu Orchestra's "Dance of Maya", for example.

Goodsall set about developing his technique "pretty much by feel. I found myself sitting around a lot improvising a lot with an acoustic guitar," and learnt a lot by just playing with the other members of Brand X.

"Pete and Robin are into Lydian modes and Dorian modes and all this kind of thing, and we've hit all that, diminished stuff, flattened semitones clashing. Since I've been in Brand X I've learnt a bit more about soloing over those kind of passages, which is like more of a jazz thing."

John's preference is for hollow bodied guitars — he mainly uses a Gibson ES345 stereo (a 1974 model), which gives a lot of sustain, and a Gibson ES175 for quieter, funkier playing because it has a harder sound and "doesn't feed back so much." He also uses a Fender Stratocaster (about 1974) for louder, rockier passages. "It's got some pre-amp in it," explains John. "I'm just having it done up by this really good guitar bloke in the States called John Carruthers, who designs a lot of stuff for Yamaha and Ibanez." His guitar strings are Rotosound Superwound, gauges 009 to 042 and his amp is a Burman combo (he thinks it's 160 watts). "I like the pre-amp stages in it, it's all set up in a line, it's no hassle, I can virtually adjust it in total darkness. I find it's very directional, the spread is a bit better than most." John also uses a selection of Washburn guitars.



Peter Robinson
Keyboard player Peter Robinson "never really liked pop music" when he was young

"because it was always so atrociously performed." Like percussionist Morris Pert he had a formal training at the Royal Academy of Music, having started playing piano at the age of 11 and "making so much headway that it was decided that I should take it more seriously and get a proper training." But he soon became disenchanted with the restriction of musical freedom enforced by the Academy. "One of the things I was very good at was improvisation, which was essentially discouraged at the Academy," he explains. "You got two minutes of improvisation — what they politely called 'extemporisation' — at the end of the year as an ear test. I thought 'why do I keep doing things by other people?' when I could actually sit down and music would come out. So I tried a sort of semi-jazz. I did one jazz gig, a bebop thing, and couldn't understand what was going on. So I turned towards Indian classical music, which incorporates improvisation, and found that was more understandable and I could express myself more clearly."

After leaving the Royal Academy he spent about three years as a session musician, which helped wean him onto a more electric-based diet. He played with Chris Farlowe for a while and then joined a band called Quartermass.

After Quartermass Robinson was with Stomu Yamashta and Suintreader, a sort of avant garde rock band that also consisted of bassist Neville Whitehead, Paul Buckmaster (of Elton John fame) on cello, Morris Pert, soprano sax player Robin Thompson and Martin Ford (arranger for Barclay James Harvest) on electric French horn. Peter then played with Sean Phillips for a while and got fed up with it, so decided to move to the States.

It was a lucky move. He played on Lenny White's *Venusian Summer* album and then one day received a phone call from Stanley Clarke inviting him to do a European tour, which naturally he accepted. That was how he met Brand X — they were the support band on the tour, and when Robin Lumley left to concentrate on production Peter joined.

Robin came back to play with the band on their recent tour, and it was a strange sight indeed to see two keyboard players squeezed into one corner of the stage sharing the same set up — a Yamaha CP70 electric grand, a Roland string machine, Sequential Circuits Prophet V and a Yamaha CS80.

"We've virtually never had a collision," claims Robinson. "Basically it's like one keyboard player with four hands, rather than two separate units. On most things we've worked out who does what, but on some nights he'll go to another instrument and I'll be going 'what?'"

Percy Jones

You may find this difficult to believe, but Brand X's superhuman bass player was always bottom of the music class at school. So there's hope for some of you frustrated pluckers yet.

Jones the Bass has a phenomenal technique which is sometimes hard to believe — a tape of Brand X's Venue gig had the IM&RW staff gasping in astonishment at Percy's solo. And not just at his agility — the man has got Funk with a big F, and his solo spots display infinitely more taste than Weather Report's Mr Superbass Jaco Pastorius.

Percy's technique revolves around resting his thumb on the back pickup of his Wal fretless bass. "If I can't anchor it onto something I can't play properly," he explained. Therefore, there are certain types of elec-

tric bass that he finds difficult to get to grips with.

The Wal bass is made by a bloke called Ian Waller, nickname Wal, who is based in High Wycombe. One day Wal approached Percy with a bass to try out and he was immediately impressed. "Before I used the Wal I had a Fender Precision fretless. I could never get enough mid-range out of it, no matter how much EQ I used it would never come out, and it didn't sustain very well. The first thing that impressed me with the Wal was that I could get all this mid-range response."

His amplification is made by Frunt, a small company based in Surbiton. He uses a total of 400 watts, consisting of two 200 watt amps and two cabs, one a reflex cabinet with two 15-inch speakers, the other a 4 x 12 (the speakers are Fane). "It's a pretty straightforward amplifier," says Jones. "Before that I'd used an Ampeg SBT which was good, but it also had a certain roughness in sound, a real second harmonic distortion. I've been trying to get a cleaner sound because with a rough sound I just play harder on the instrument. This one does the job."



It was Jaco Pastorius who provoked Jones' interest in bringing out the mid-range on the bass guitar. "I think he's done a lot for the electric bass, not just technique and playing but the sound too. It's still basically the same instrument, a Fender Jazz fretless. But with Fender basses before that all you could hear would be the fundametal, I always thought they sounded a bit characterless. So he revolutionised things in that respect, he made the Fender bass sound more interesting."

Another bass player that has influenced him is, surprise, surprise, Stanley Clarke. "I thought that when he first came out he was quite phenomenal." And an early influence was Charlie Mingus because of his "tremendous feeling for his music."

Percy's musical career began when he was studying electronics at Liverpool University. He started playing with guitarist Andy

Roberts and they teamed up with Adrian Henri to form the Liverpool Scene (remember the "Fleetwood Mac, Chicken Shack, John Mayall, Can't Fail Blues"?). He became frustrated with the band, did a short tour with the Scaffold and then dropped out of music for a period.

Jones' nimble bass playing seems even more incredible when you consider that he had not touched the instrument for two years before joining Brand X. He was working on building sites and was thinking about which musical direction he wanted to go in. It was during this period that he started listening to early Weather Report and Miles Davis' jazz-rock experiments, which motivated him to get back into music again.

Mike Clarke

Asking drummer Mike Clarke what bands he has played with before Brand X is like asking Yehudi Menuhin if he has done anything before getting together with Stephane Grappelli. The man's musical pedigree is simply phenomenal.

Mike is the only American member of Brand X, although Percy Jones now lives in New York. He has played drums since he was a child, and has been a professional musician since he left high school. When Clarke was in his early twenties he played with such respected names as trumpeter Woody Shaw, vibist Bobby Hutcherson and blues singer Mose Allison around San Francisco. He went on the road and played "a lot of different blues and jazz gigs" and then met up with bass player Paul Jackson.

"In our desperation to find enough work playing jazz we were starving, so we started playing funk because it seemed to be the next best thing you could play and use some creative energy. We were living in East Oakland, it was like a breeding ground for all kinds of funk that were coming out of California at the time. I got to do a lot of it."

The Jackson and Clarke team auditioned for Herbie Hancock just after the best selling *Headhunters* album and got the job. Mike stayed for four years, playing on *Thrust*, *Flood*, *Man Child* and a couple of other albums that he can't remember. "I still had a great love of jazz, I wanted to play jazz or something I could get creative on," says Mike. "So I went to work with Eddie Henderson for about a year and played with a few cats like Pharoah Sanders, David Liebman and Julian Priester."

He got together his own band but found work difficult to come by, and teamed up with British born organist Brian Auger. His association with Brand X began shortly after he played on a few record dates with Peter Robinson, when he was invited to play on the *Product* album.

Mike's drum kit is Gretsch, consisting of 24-inch bass drum, 8 x 12 and 9 x 12 mounted toms, 14", 16" and 18" floor toms, a deep Ludwig snare, K. Zildjian 22" ride cymbal, A. Zildjian 18" crash, and sometimes another 18" or 20". A. Zildjian crash and at other times a big Chinese cymbal.

Why Gretsch? "They just have a certain sound," he says. "I can't explain, a certain ring to them that I like, and I can really hear the separation in between the different drums." Drummers that have influenced Clarke include Elvin Jones, Art Blakey and Philly Jo Jones. But there are only two drummers that "I really love in the universe and they are Tony Williams and Alphonse Mouzon. What Alphonse did with McCoy Tyner I thought was the most amazing drumming I'd ever heard in my life, and some of the most amazing music as well."

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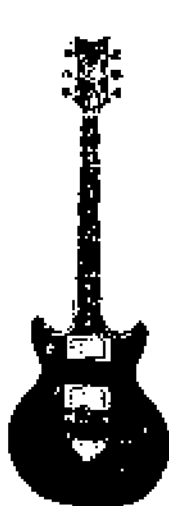
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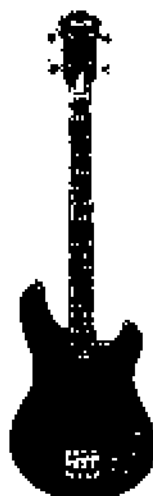
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DOUBLE GUITARCHECK

ARIA
"Herb Ellis"
model
£369.00
(inc. VAT and
case)

If two guitarists meet and start talking about jazz, there is a good chance they are each talking about different kinds of music. The types of guitar traditionally associated with various kinds of jazz are also subject to the same kind of confusion. If we take for example, a Gibson L5, or an Epiphone Emperor, many of the old school of players would reject the description "jazz-guitar" for these instruments and insist (quite correctly) that they are plectrum guitars.

On the other hand, many younger players would describe them loosely as jazz guitars on the empirical base that jazz is what people usually play on them. From their point of view, it is just as valid a description. We are not out of the woods yet, because there

are various opinions on the exact meaning and applications of the word jazz itself. However, if my friend Val will forgive me, I am going to sidestep that one for the moment, and plough on with this month's guitar reviews.

Most of the old school of jazz guitar players already have nice old arch-top plectrum guitars and they are not likely to be interested in modern instruments. However, for those young rockers who secretly aspire to becoming old jazzers, here are a couple of interesting and very different instruments. If it be possible without opening up Pandora's box into the Letters page, I should like to call them both "jazz guitars".

The first one of the pair is the Aria Herb Ellis model. As Aria have very honestly proclaimed, "Herb Ellis did not design this guitar, he just gave it a good name" — or something like that. Well it is a good name. Mr Ellis is an impressive and tasteful player, he has been around for long enough, and he ought to know a good guitar when he sees one. So what has he put his name to?

Aria's Herb Ellis guitar, which is also labelled "Aria Pro II" across the head and the tailpiece, is a medium-sized, arch-top guitar with f-holes, two pickups, a single cutaway and a pearl-inlaid ebony fingerboard. The pearl inlay may not reproduce very well in the accompanying photo, but the pieces are well matched and nicely figured, and the inlay work is almost impossible to fault, even on close inspection.

This is not the usual sort of job, with oversize inlay holes and plenty of black epoxy filler: this pearl actually fits. The fingerboard is good quality, straight-grained ebony, with slightly scruffy plastic bindings and nicely shaped frets of medium width. The machine heads are gold-finished Japanese Schaller-copies. As machine heads, they work well enough, but it is a pity that they should look so much like the German machines. There are plenty of other possible shapes for machine head buttons. By now, Aria are big enough and prestigious enough, that they have no need to be playing about with "look-alike" copies.

Although many guitars now

have brass or Micarta nuts, this one has a nut made from bleached bone. This material has similar properties to ivory, and should please both the traditionalists and the elephants. There are two sorts of truss-rod used in Japanese necks. One has a screwed rod running in an aluminium channel. The other has a screwed rod set directly into the neck and works the same way as truss rods in Gibsons, Fenders, Guilds, and others. I think it is preferable, for several reasons, and it is this "American-style" truss rod system which is used in the Herb Ellis Aria. It is said to give a better sustain and it certainly works in a more predictable manner.

As some jazz guitar players are likely to use rather heavy strings, it is a wise choice for this particular guitar. The neck is made from Luan, or something rather similar, and the body is made from laminated maple or possibly birch wood. Most of the body strength seems to come from the arched shape of the front and back, as the only bracing visible inside is a curiously-shaped "pillar" from front to back, just behind the bridge. The two gold-plated humbucking pickups and the usual selector switch and controls are fitted directly to the body.

The bridge has a wooden base to fit the arched front of the guitar, with a die-cast metal top section having the usual electric guitar bridge intonation adjustments. The tailpiece is modelled after a similar Gibson tailpiece and retains this unit's odd adjustable brace between the underside of the tailpiece and the edge of the guitar front. I believe this was supposed to adjust the down pressure on the bridge, but as I have yet to find an "original" of this kind which was working properly, I cannot fairly comment on the working of the "copy". If anything, it is likely to work better on the hard laminated front of this Aria than on the relatively soft front of the original Gibson model.

The whole guitar is finished in yellow/brown/black sunburst and a hard clear gloss lacquer. F-holes and body edges are neatly bound with plastic trim and the whole guitar has a very clean and





straightforward appearance.

The neck on our sample guitar is quite straight, and will accept a low action without problems. I found that the guitar works quite happily with either medium or light strings, without needing any truss rod adjustments. (Another advantage of the "American-style" truss rod, when correctly fitted into a good neck.) The string action as supplied, at nut and bridge is a good general purpose compromise, which should suit most players. Recent converts from solid electric guitar might like the strings a little lower at the nut. Some of the older players I have met would prefer them a bit higher above the frets at the nut end and perhaps a bit lower at the bridge end. This would produce similar twelfth fret action measurements but a totally different feel in each case. Twelfth fret measurements are a useful guide, but they are not the whole story. There is a tendency for strings to creak as they pass over the nut, but I think you all know the cure for that, by now.

At the time of review, the nearest guitar I had available for direct comparison, was an old Gibson Switchmaster, with three pickups, but otherwise of roughly similar construction.

Both guitars would feed back if placed too near to the amp, and at almost identical notes (around middle E on the D-string). In both cases, feedback could be controlled, but not eliminated, by covering the f-holes with gaffer tape, or filling the guitar body with well teased-out Terylene fluff. This problem has not prevented Steve Howe from using a Switchmaster in the past. It is probably one of those things which is worse in theory than in practice.

The voicing of the pickups on the Aria was brighter and more "open" than on the Gibson, although there was little apparent difference in output level. It was noticeable that this guitar, a full, hollow bodied, electric/acoustic, had rather more "poke" than one particular make of American solid-body guitar, widely advertised on the basis of the unusually high output and aggressive sound of its pickups. It may be that Aria have chosen these pickups with the needs and tastes of rock guitarists in mind.

Conclusion

Overall, this is a nice and not too fancy looking guitar, with a very attractive fingerboard, inlaid in the old style. It balances

well, feels comfortable to play over long periods, and was supplied well adjusted, with good quality fittings. The sound is a bit more mellow than many solid guitars, but it can certainly hold its own if you are worried about pickup output levels.

Almost any guitar of this type will produce some feedback if you stand too close to the amp. Gaffer tape over the holes, fluff inside the body, and possibly a small graphic equaliser with one of the middle sliders pulled well down, seem to keep the problem under control in practical playing conditions. You may need none of them, or all three, depending on how, and where, you play.

Aria Herb Ellis Model

Serial No: 088024

Price: £369.20 (inc. VAT and case)

Source/Importer: Gigsville, UK

Scale length: 629mm

String spacing at bridge: 55mm

Fingerboard width at nut: 43mm

String spacing at nut: 36mm

Depth of neck at fret 1: 20mm

Depth of neck at fret 10: 27mm

Action as supplied: 1.3mm treble/

2.2mm bass

Lowest recommended action:

1.5mm treble/2.5mm bass

20 frets on fingerboard/body joins

at fret 17 on treble side. Body

depth at waist 85mm. Heel starts

around frets 9/10.

Stephen Delft is a maker and repairer of guitars and other instruments, and a member of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology. He is also a more than capable performer on the guitar.

DOUBLE GUITARCHECK

JOHN LEVOI Small- soundhole "Mac" model £600 approx.

The second guitar of this pair is a very nice hand-made acoustic, by John Levoi, based on the Macaferri model with a small oval soundhole (rather than the more often seen version with the large D-shaped soundhole.) This instrument incorporates the unusual, centrally arched soundboard, found in real Macaferri guitars, but not in some of the modern replicas.

John had the good fortune to find a Macaferri guitar which had come to pieces from damage and neglect, and I had the good sense to photograph the inside of it in considerable detail, before it was put back together. Although there was much external damage, the inside showed clearly the method of construction and assembly of the parts.

When I met Mario Macaferri at the London Music Trade Fair a few years ago, he said that in his opinion, the important part of old Macaferri guitars was the soundboard construction, not the more interesting-looking internal sound chamber. Well, he designed those guitars and he ought to know which bits are more important and which bits, less so. Later experiments in making similar guitars with the "correct" soundboard, but without sound chambers or baffles, would seem to confirm

this point. Not all Mac's had these internal fittings anyway, and the situation is further confused by some old instruments which have had parts added or removed at a later date.

The Levoi version has a mahogany neck, ebony fingerboard and bridge, rosewood tailpiece, imbuia back and sides, and an attractive figured spruce front. Some of these features may need a little more explanation. The neck has a slotted head and appropriate Schaller machines, with decorated chrome plates and "pearl" buttons. There is a rosewood facing on the front of the head, matching the colour of the tailpiece facing.

There does not appear to be any adjustable truss rod, but the neck is so rigid that it must have adequate steel reinforcement built in. Surprisingly, this has not made the instrument feel neck-heavy. The fingerboard is simple enough: it is good ebony, fairly wide, with a moderate camber and smoothly finished low, wide frets.

The bridge is the usual kind for this type of guitar, but you may not have seen one before. It is made of ebony, in three pieces. The two pointed end pieces are glued to the front, while the centre part is carved to fit exactly onto the guitar front, but left free to move. It is held in place by string down-pressure. The separate centre section allows for some adjustment to string intonation and also provides some decoupling, allowing the centre part to vibrate partly by itself and partly with the end pieces and therefore with a larger area of soundboard.

In addition to the possible movement of the centre bridge section, for intonation adjustment, its top edge is carved into a staggered shape to approximate the different bridge positions required by each string in the set. As supplied, the guitar was fitted with Guild light bronze, or something similar, and all the strings played acceptably in tune at the twelfth fret.

The tailpiece appears to be made from two thin slabs of rosewood, with the strings fitted into small holes and pockets carved into the wood.

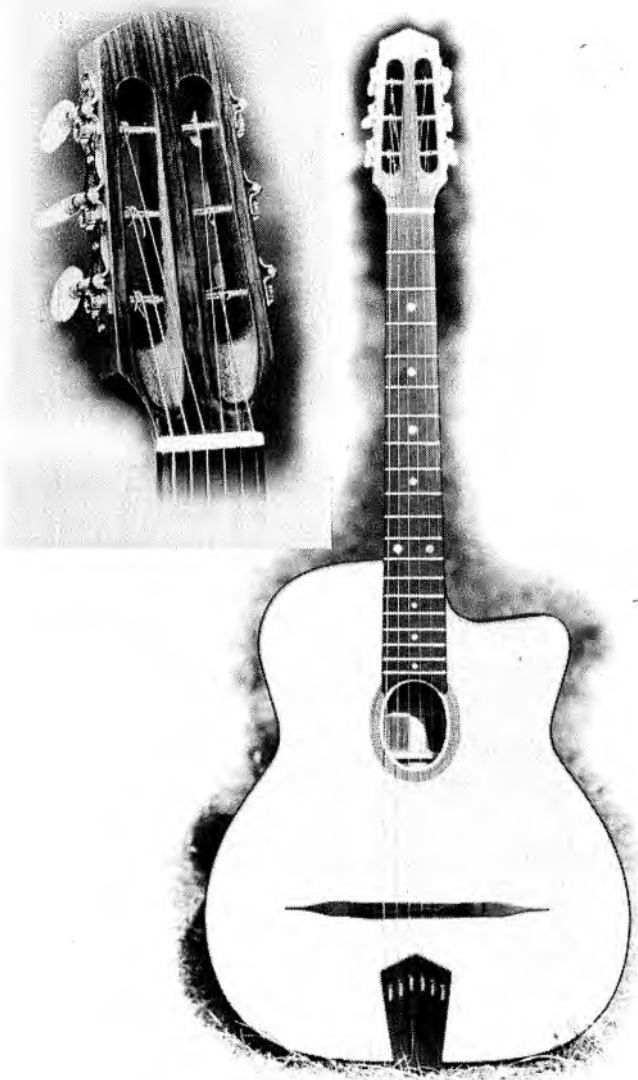
In fact there is a metal plate set into the underside of the rosewood pieces, which continues round the edge of the soundboard and is screwed to the bottom end of the guitar in the usual way. A neat and attractive solution.

The back and sides are made from a South American wood called imbuia, which is slowly gained popularity among instrument makers. It is generally a dark amber colour, with a variety of figuring, but it is rare to find enough similar pieces of wood for making two guitars the same. Each one is different in appearance, which is fine for individual makers, but difficult for larger companies who need to prepare representative catalogue pictures. Two guitars made from opposite ends of the same board may be patterned like a striped cat, in one case and a black and white cow, in the other.

This instrument has a medium brown colour, with a figuring on the back which looks like puckered silk. The spruce soundboard, on the other hand, looks like smooth silk which has been gently folded.

Altogether, it is a very attractive guitar, it is accurately made, it feels good to play and is so pretty, it would be a shame to leave it in its case. It is the sort of guitar I would prefer to hang up on the wall, where it can be seen. The tone is perhaps a little more full than the similar Macaferri original, and slightly less percussive. This may be an advantage, unless you particularly want to sound exactly like old recordings. The tone is loud and pleasant, and the volume and sustain-times of the individual strings well balanced.

Stephen Delft



Levoi "Macaferri" model

Serial No: "Made May 1980"

Price: around £600

Source/maker: John Levoi,
Alford, Lincs

Scale length: 642mm

String spacing at bridge: 59mm

Fingerboard width at nut: 44mm

String spacing at nut: 36.5mm

Depth of neck at fret 1: 22.5mm

Depth of neck at fret 10: 26.5mm

Action as supplied: 1.9mm treble/
2.2mm bass

19 frets on fingerboard/body joins
at fret 14 on treble side. Body
depth at waist 100mm. Heel starts
around frets 9/10.

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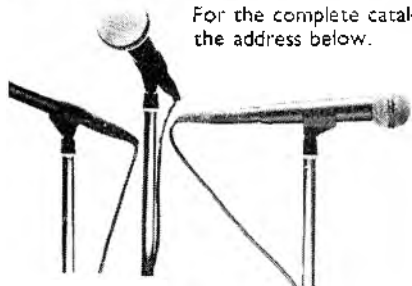
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SOUNDCHECK

The WEM Soundman JB-100 Amplifier £268 inc VAT

The Soundman JB-100 amplifier is a five-channel and 10 input designed multi-purpose system, which is claimed to deliver acoustic power levels of about 145 watts into 4 ohms of speaker load. The amp comes from WEM, a well-known London based firm and retails at around £245 which includes VAT. The range of applications of multi-input amplification systems such as this one ranges from small PA installations, club-type work to stage keyboard amplification rigs and so on. Obviously, when buying this sort of gear combining both mixer and power amp functions, one cannot expect to get everything normally found in 10-channel mixers and in power slave amplifiers.

At the same time, however, the JB-100 offers a number of useful features such as: compact size, reduction in number of connection leads, short installation time, plus flexibility in use. The JB-100 package, in fact, offers quite a few things together, for example — six-band graphic EQ, built in reverberation unit, remote echo/effects operations, patching facilities, channel reverb LED indicators, reverb tone control and above all the capacity around the 10 jacks to plug in mikes, connect speakers and power leads and then forget about them.

Construction

The Soundman JB-100 is a universal amplification system designed for both semi-professional and professional use. The electronic circuit connectors and controls on one hand, and the cosmetics on the other, have been kept at a minimum for simplicity of operation, and overall economy. All channel/master type controls of the JB-100 are located on the front panel, while the power outlet, external fuse holder, power on/off switch and main IEC socket are on the rear.

- Five-channel control boxes incorporating volume, treble, bass potentiometers and a reverb on/off push button with an associated red LED indicator.

- Five-channel input boxes provided with two ¼ inch equal priority jacks allowing a total of 10 audio signals to be plugged into the system.

- Graphic equaliser — placed on more or less the central part of the panel and containing six slide potentiometers, calibrated at 150Hz; 300Hz; 600Hz; 1.2kHz and finally 1.5kHz + 10kHz.

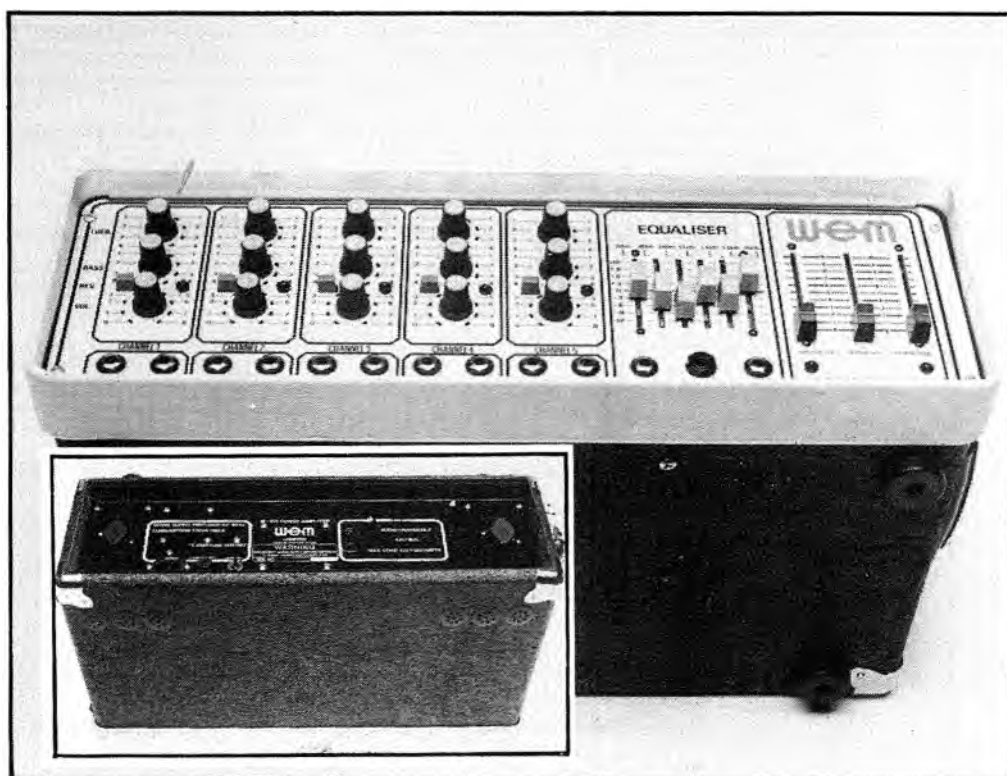
All sliders according to the legend printed on the panel should allow for symmetrical cut and boost up to +12dB, but I will come back to this later. Below the EQ section are

three ¼ inch jacks which serve as: slave in, ext. echo, and footswitch.

- Finally, the master section box has three controls only, ie master volume, reverb volume and reverb tone. All three are slide potentiometers marked zero to 10 and the pair of LEDs mounted below them act as power indicators.

A couple of remarks while we are still talking of the front panel. The amp's fascia is made of brushed aluminium with all lettering in black matt except for one — the WEM emblem which is, and always has been, red. The majority of front panel controls seem to be of a reasonable quality, but what I did not like were the sliders — which are fitted without the usual dust protection slaves above the slider inside the casing. The delicate carbon track can be seen from the outside which means that dust and moisture penetration is certainly a possibility.

Turning to the inside of the JB-100 — the access is extremely easy by just removing four Philips screws. The first thing you see is a neatly designed output stage/power supply module built around the rear panel which also acts as a heatsink for one pair of popular 2N 2773 silicon transistors. The power amp PCB incorporates a driver and inverter circuitry,



and this stage is designed with a built in short circuit protection feature.

The power supply is like most similar constructions — not stabilised, with huge smoothing capacitors of $2 \times 4700\mu\text{F}$ (Lorlin) and the whole module is connected to the rest of the amp via a single white nylon rectangular six-pin socket. The input to the power module uses a screened cable for improved noise performance. Last but not least, the two 2N 2773 devices use a special snap on TO-3 socket and are covered from the outside by a black plastic cup for safety reasons. As mentioned earlier, the JB-100 has a built-in reverb effect, which happens to be our well-known Hammond-Accutronics model 4FB2AIC and is fitted in the central part of the enclosure — ie between the power amp module and just behind the motherboard PCB, housing all the pre-amp circuitry, EQ controls etc.

The enclosure of the amps is made of chipboard coated with traditional black resin, incorporating 12 ventilation ducts set symmetrically in groups of three for air circulation.

Conclusion

The Soundman model JB-100 by WEM is a relatively simple and straightforward amplification system, very easy to use and it really takes only a few minutes for the complete system to be set-up, in order to get it fully operational. As WEM did not provide any owner's literature, we tried our "blind" test, the amp was given to a person with a broad musical experience and very little on the technical side. He managed to set up and connect the system in just under 10 minutes, which just proves my point concerning simplicity. I feel that the JB-100 could be specially useful for small bands who can't afford to have a separate sound engineer and have to operate their own small PA.

One remark at this point is that it seems to be worthwhile to have a "middle" control in the tone correction stage, however, the graphic EQ covers this range (bands 2 & 3). The reverb on/off control is the only living reverb authority as far as channel control is

concerned which means that the channel reverb level control is non-existent, and you can get full reverb or none — the choice is yours.

A good thing is the reverb tone correction, which is obviously a very useful feature.

A couple of comments on the functional side of the machine. As you can see from the specification table enclosed, the first five bands in the Graphic EQ are specified with +10dB of boost/cut, our measured figures are given in the results column for you to

compare. Remember, the slight difference does not mean that anything is necessarily wrong, as the accuracy of the "centre" frequencies are only as good as the tolerance of the components used, and in most cases precise tuning does not take place.

What I cannot understand is the reason why WEM calibrated the front panel graphic EQ controls at +12dB which does not make much sense. Apart from this the majority of figures match the manufac-

turer's spec, wherever specified, as we really got very little from them. Pity.

The power measured at onset of clipping was just above 130 Watts into 4 ohms and this level should be specified by WEM in their specs, rather than 145 watts.

Summing up, the JB-100 is a real value for money product, with one or two simplifications but the function and content value is still very high.

Mark Sawicki

Parameter	Result	Test Condition	Comments
Specific Power Output	132.25WRMS 72.08WRMS	Onset of clipping /4 ohms 11KHz Onset of clipping /8 ohms	WEM spec claims the power output of 145 Watts / 4 ohms load, however the test condition not stated. Our results correspond to onset of clipping level + indicate approx. 132W RMS (4 ohms) and 72 Watts (8 ohms). The manufacturer recommends total speaker impedance of 4 ohms, as with 8 ohms loads corresponding power level reduction of about 45.5% is observed.
Total Harmonic Distortion (% THD)	0.05% @ 0.028% @ 0.04% @ 0.042% @ 0.06% @ 0.01% @	130 Wrms 100 Wrms 80 Wrms 50 Wrms 25 Wrms 10 Wrms 5 Wrms	Good. Quite typical levels and character of Harmonic Distortions for this type of amplifier. The minimum THD level corresponds to about 80 Watts (4 ohms) power output. The quality of sound of this amp can be regarded as satisfactory. The THD test was carried out with Reverb OFF, T/C-FLAT EQ section OFF, Master Volume @ 8.
Input sensitivity in mVRMS for 130 Watts RMS (22.8 OV RMS) output signal Ref. 1KHz	14.32 mVRMS 14.51 mVRMS	Input 1 & Input 2 - Channel 1 measurement only. 4 ohms dummy load applied. Reverb Off, T/C Flat, EQ section FLAT Master Volume @ 8. Measured digitally using Sangamp-Western model 6000 Digital Multimeter.	Both input 1&2 are practically of equal sensitivity and quite close to specified 12 mV (for 145W output into 4 ohms). All ten inputs are 1/4" jack sockets mounted on the lower part of the front panel. Each channel has two inputs — with common Volume and tone controls. When using mikes, similar or even identical types should be used on individual channels for best results.
Signal/Noise Ratio	88.40dB	Treb/Bass controls set flat; EQ OFF Ref. 130 Watt output into 4 ohms dummy load.	Could be better. Unweighted and true RMS reading on AN/M2 Radford noise meter with reference to power levels of 130 Watts (22.8 OV RMS)
Tone Controls Range (Swing in dB)	22.8dB - swing 24.2dB - swing	Treble @ 16KHz, Bass-Flat, EQ - FLAT Bass @ 20Hz, Treb-Flat, EQ - Flat	Satisfactory. Nice and symmetrical tone correction system is used. Specified 1KHz response with EQ in Flat position = 9dB; 40dB Ref. 10dB; -12dB; -10dB Ref. 10 KHz. For PA-work Channel "middle" control could be very useful, however graphic covers this range.
Graphic Equaliser	21.2dB - swing indB 18.7 " 17.6 " 16.8 " 17.4 " 9.5 "	bnd 1@150Hz, Ref. bnds. 1,2,3,4,5, 6, Flat bnd 2@300Hz, Ref. bnds. 1,3,4,5, 6, Flat bnd 3@600Hz, Ref. bnds. 1,2,4,5, 6, Flat bnd 4@1.2KHz, Ref. bnd. 1,2,3,5, 6, Flat bnd. 5@2.4KHz, Ref. bnd. 1,2,3,4, 6, Flat bnd. 6@5KHz, Ref. bnd. 1,2,3,4,5, Flat	WEM figures are as follows. +10dB @ 150Hz; +10dB @ 300Hz; -10dB @ 600Hz; -10dB @ 1.2KHz. For the last band specification claims +7dB, -3dB @ 8KHz. Bands 3,4,5, should have slightly more "range". The "zero" level on the sliders clicks into place. The calibration of the controls is 0, -3, +6, +9, -12 which is obviously a little bit too optimistic even for specified figures
Reverberation/Echo	OK	Internal Reverberation/Echo switchable to each channel	Ref. LED Reverb provided in each channel. Master tone volume and tone slide potentiometers used for overall Channel Reverb control.
Capacitance Load Test	OK	2 microfarads non-electrolytic capacitor and 4 ohms dummy load applied.	Acceptable
Open Circuit Stability Test	OK	dummy load removed, all five channels volume @ 8, Master Volume control @ 10, T/C Flat EQ OFF.	Good stability margin proving that the amp should operate satisfactorily with most typical load conditions.
Short circuit Test	20 seconds	Full drive into 4 ohms, Ref. 1KHz	WEM claim that the power-amp section is short circuit protected. No sheets worked normally at 50 Hz.



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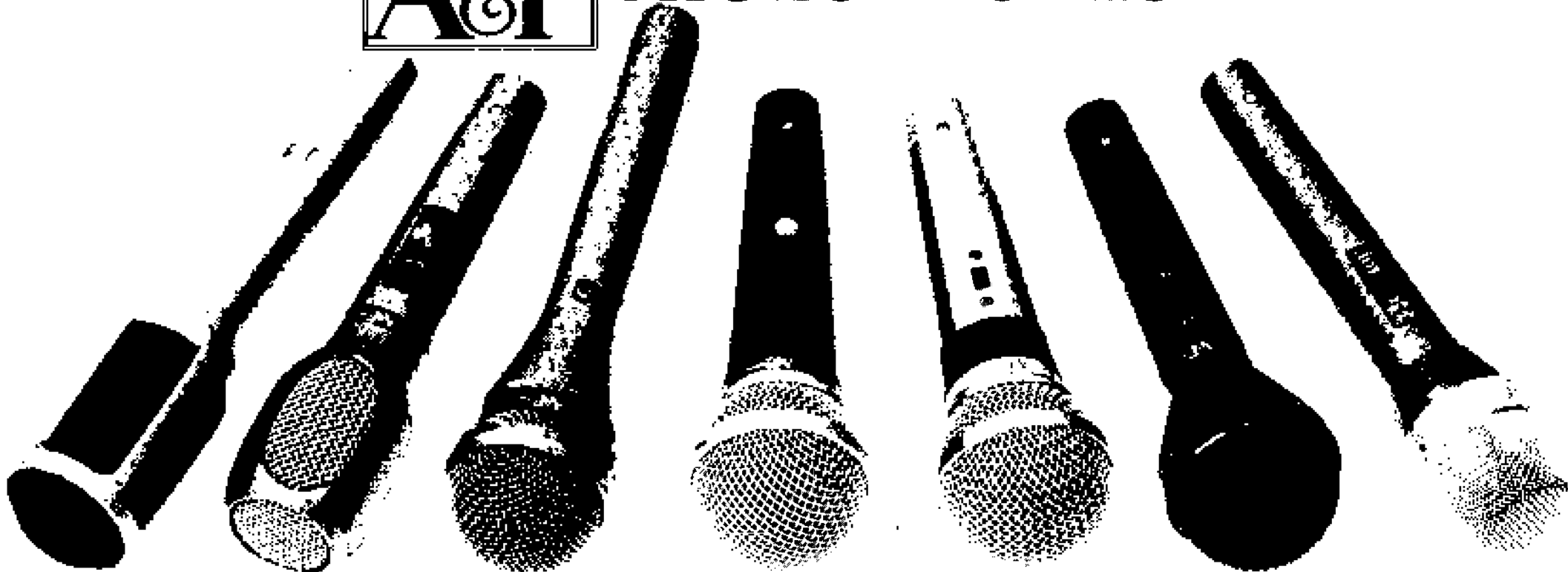
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This microphone is an up-market version of the MC-35SD. It has superior cut-through and tonal qualities. Its wide dynamic range make this microphone very suitable for recording purposes and for conditions where extra clarity is required.
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SYNTHCHECK

LOGAN Vocal Synth £2,485 inc VAT

This machine has nothing to do with vocoders or Mellotrons — it really is a unique instrument that attempts to reproduce the effect of a large choir singing in four-part harmony. Its price reflects the amount of new design technology and circuitry it contains, for this is not just a singing keyboard. It has a comprehensive three-oscillator monophonic synthesizer that includes solo and polyphonic presets. And to complete the line-up comes a string machine that converts to "church" organ, plus electric piano and harpsichord. A split keyboard allows different blends of these instrumental/vocal groups and a built-in mixer gives separate panning of each section in stereo.

Quite some instrument at first glance, this one — and like several multi-layer preset machines, gets "better" to play as you learn to use it. Some unusual features too, which might tempt you one way or the other into buying the Vocal Synth.

Construction

The instrument is housed in a large sturdy case finished in standard Logan fashion with black vinyl covering and plastic corner protectors. One carrying handle is provided, although the cabinet really needs two people to lift it without pulling your back out. The case is wider than most, measuring 40½" long, 21½" high and 13" wide.

A chrome stand comes in a smart black leatherette case and screws together easily to support the instrument. Once the large retaining knobs are fastened at each end of the stand to the cabinet it is possible to tilt the instrument backward or forward for best playing position. This feature is useful, for the control panel is set at two angles and tilting the cabinet forward slightly enables the top controls to be seen more clearly. With the cabinet level the keyboard stands 30" off the floor.

All the connections are grouped on the rear panel of the cabinet, with a detachable mains lead, fuse, illuminated AC power switch and standard jack sockets for left and right "stereo" outputs and a straight mono mix output. A separate foot pedal also plugs in here



for controlling overall volume and piano sustain.

Lifting the complete front keyboard and control panel reveals the main circuitry in one "computer" bus-board set up plus a very big power supply. Underneath the keyboard are reliable single contacts for producing the note-pitches and over the control panel area is the mass of wiring and components for the synth section and control panel switching. The main "computer" pack has no less than 11 filter boards holding over 36 ICs on each plus another seven boards with a lot more chips for producing piano, string, organ tone and sound shaping. This daunting component count might lead you to suspect that some instability would arise in continued use. I can only say that I have been using the instrument for over a month with no trouble except for some distortion on a couple of presets due to incorrect setting up and some initial tuning drift which surprisingly cured itself after a few hours use.

The control panel consists of an upper section lying nearly horizontal and a vertical sloping lower section. The single keyboard manual is split into two parts — the lower section ranges over two octaves (F to E) and has its own slider controls for piano and harpsichord, strings or organ, and SATB voices. The right hand section of the keyboard covers three octaves, having an additional octave that goes below the left hand section. This seems most unusual at first, for two-hand organ style playing has to be done on this top part of the keyboard in order to get that lower octave. Accom-

panying middle and high range chords can be added on the LH section slider presets to add choral and instrumental sounds against the upper section. The right hand part of the keyboard has the same sounds as the left, but uses its own set of controls so that different textures can be obtained by using alternate ends.

I must admit this control panel was not what I expected — having imagined that the vast array of controls was for making glorious choral sounds, I found that all the upper section sliders and pushbuttons were in fact for a mono/poly synth that works on the upper half of the keyboard.

The basic choral sound is preset and is selected from a mixer section located in the middle of the upper panel between the synth controls. There are pushbuttons for choosing piano, strings, voices or synth, separately or together. Strings can be converted to a rich church organ sound at the touch of another button and three different vowel sounds can be selected for the voices. Four sliders give left-to-right output panning of these sections and a main volume slider is also provided, plus a couple of holes for screwdriver adjustment of output impedance and overall pitch. All the sliders are coloured bright red, yellow or blue with chrome and red pushbuttons. The panel itself is of black coated metal with clear white labelling.

Above the keyboard are three thin metallic strips that give pitchbend and vibrato delay control by touching the upper/middle or middle/lower strips with a finger. They are

SYNTHCHECK

close enough to be done by either hand during playing. The "pitched" effect is the most useful, giving an instant drop of up to a tone (using the depth control), finishing with a gradual rise back to the original note taking up to four seconds (set by the time-bend slider). The vibrato delay works on the synth section only.

Piano section

The left and right piano section each contain four sliders for mixing 16' 8' piano, honky-tonk and harpsichord. The piano sound is a little woolly, with the characteristic piano sound envelope making it more like an electric than a traditional acoustic piano tone. Mixing the two pitches gives a good solo or arpeggio sound. Honky-tonk is the usual "piano with upper harmonics added", and harpsichord has the correct dry sound envelope but is not bright enough for my liking. Piano sustain is controllable from the panel or the foot pedal by tilting the foot against a side lever.

String section

A choice of violin or viola to blend together, with a rich phasing effect built in. Two further sliders control attack and sustain (or "release") times. Since control times are becoming more critical when choosing string machines, I will mention that attack simply takes the edge off and sustain gives up to four seconds decay after release of the note.

It's an acceptable string orchestra sound with quite a lot of high tone present on violin. When played on the right hand keyboard section, the viola makes a usable cello sound in the lower octave. Pressing a control button marked "organ", removes most of the phasing to give an impressive church organ effect that will add depth to any kind of music played on this instrument.

Voices

Well, this is the one you've been waiting for — I hope! It's not what you expect — that's for sure. This section gives a fascinating new sound that will make a choral backing reminiscent of Rick Wakeman's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. It is at its most convincing when used sparingly and

with frequent changes of Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass combinations. I like to change the vowel sounds as I play — there are A, O, and U sounds available. "A" is by far the best — you can even make the "Hallelujah" from Handel's *Messiah* by jiggling the buttons!

The bass voice has to be set quite low and works on the lowest note played. The other voices work on all notes. Bass can also have portamento from the synth section. Using the attack, accent and sustain controls gives some very interesting sound envelopes — just like emphasizing a word when singing and its long release gives its own kind of sustained reverberation effect that is very good. The voice section also benefits from pitch-bend, producing rising voices that slide up to a sudden accent. The unusual sound of the voices has been obtained by a lot of clever filtering in the circuitry and certainly provides a unique sound for the keyboard player to use.

Mono and poly synth

The top three octaves of the keyboard make use of all those controls across the top panel to bring in mono and poly synth sounds. The synth sections can either function in preset or free mode, with mono working on the top note played.

There are two polyphonic preset buttons selecting 16' or 8' brass. The 16' preset produced some distortion due to overloading the next stage, but was easily corrected internally. It does, however, make a point that progressively adding sections together can produce overload in the final output mixing stages, so levels need to be kept off maximum. These brass sounds are very good, with a characteristic oo-wah filtered tone, playing on up to seven notes at once (as do all sections on both halves of the keyboard, except mono synth). Monophonic presets are Guitar, Clarinet, Horn, Oboe and Violin which enable some pleasant contrast of solo melody against the piano, string and voice sections. You can press more than one button at once for some rather peculiar combinations and the LFO controls can operate on

the presets.

In Free mode (at the press of a button), a versatile three-oscillator mono synth is available for creating your own solo sounds. The Poly switches over too, but just gives 16' and 8' pulse pitches with on/off organ touch, which is fed into the VCF and the VCA along with the three mono oscillators and a noise generator.

It would take me too long to explain all the permutations of sound obtainable from the mono synth controls so I will point out the most important features. The oscillators are neatly grouped, with the "Master Oscillator" selecting 32' 16', 8' or 4' pitch that can be sawtooth or squarewave. Oscillator 1 also has the same pitches and a tuning adjustment over more than an octave. Oscillator 2 is the same as Oscillator 1 but with 16', 8', 4' or 2' pitch choice. All three have control of the "duty cycle" (or pulsewidth) of the squarewave output. A "sync" button locks osc. 1 and 2 onto the pitch of the master oscillator enabling chords to be preset and quickly changed to unison. The noise generator gives a good white or pink signal and portamento can be set for the mono synth (and bass voices). The VCF is a low-pass type with ADSR controls and "emphasis" (or resonance) taking it into oscillation if needed. The VCA also has ADSR sliders and "overall amount" and volume controls. Triggers can be single or multiple and a keyboard follower can be brought in to open the filter for balanced harmonics over the three octave key span.

The LFO section operates on the pitch of poly, mono and presets to give vibrato which can be delayed automatically or by using the keyboard strip. Oscillators 1 and 2 can be modulated by a squarewave, as well as a trianglewave, for obtaining rapid pitch jumps. Finally wah-wah and tremolo effects can be obtained by switching the LFO to the VCF and VCA. LFO speed can be over 100 cycles per second for buzzing ring modulator kind of effects.

Summary

The instrument is well made

internally, although the smoothness of the sliders varied on the panel. Despite the rather heavy weight of the cabinet, the stand was safe and rigid in use.

The sound of the Vocal Synth is, in a word, powerful and will provide a basic orchestral and choral backing for a group, with a good solo synth included as well. The mono synth alone is quite special because of its ability to make three-note chords in parallel from one note. The instrument can be played entirely on its own for the solo keyboard player, although I like to use a pedal board as well. It would be useful if the lower keyboard could be switched to give the instrument its full five-octave note range. The stereo facility is useful, not just for panning but for sending say, to the left for echo treatment and right for straight.

When this instrument first came out at Frankfurt last year, there were a lot of inquisitive onlookers including Rick Wakeman, Pink Floyd and Manfred Mann. Some terrific blends of sound can be obtained but settings of controls have to be learnt first. Sound output naturally has some hiss with all those ICs but the high signal output level overcomes this. I've heard a few instruments with better pianos or better strings but when considered as one machine there is a lot going for this one!

Mike Beecher

Mike Beecher is a musician and keyboard consultant. He composes and performs his own electronic music using multi-keyboards, in a style based on his wide experience of progressive jazz and classical music.



MUTRON Vol-Wah and Bi-Phase

The Vol-Wah pedal is as the name suggests, a volume and wah-wah pedal. It is a mains operated unit with dimensions of 12 inches long by four inches wide. The power cable enters at the rear of the unit where there is also situated a power on/off slide and the input and output jack sockets.

The volume and wah functions are switched by two on/off foot switches which are positioned in front of the pedal and each has a red LED to show what has been selected. With this arrangement, it is possible to have both volume and wah at the same time, should you wish to do so. Situated on the right side of the case is a gain control in the form of a screw slotted rotary control. Set for minimum, the gain is approximately unity and increasing from there, making it easy to interface even with quite insensitive equipment. There is no signal through the pedal if the power is removed.

The pedal is pivoted about a third of the way from the heel position — under the arch of the foot — and it is a very comfortable action as well as being very mechanically smooth. As it is mains operated, it does not need to use the same system as battery units with their cogs turning rotary pots but instead uses a light system

— as the pedal descends, it increases the amount of light falling on the receiving assembly. So the only friction is that of the bearings and so a very smooth travel is possible.

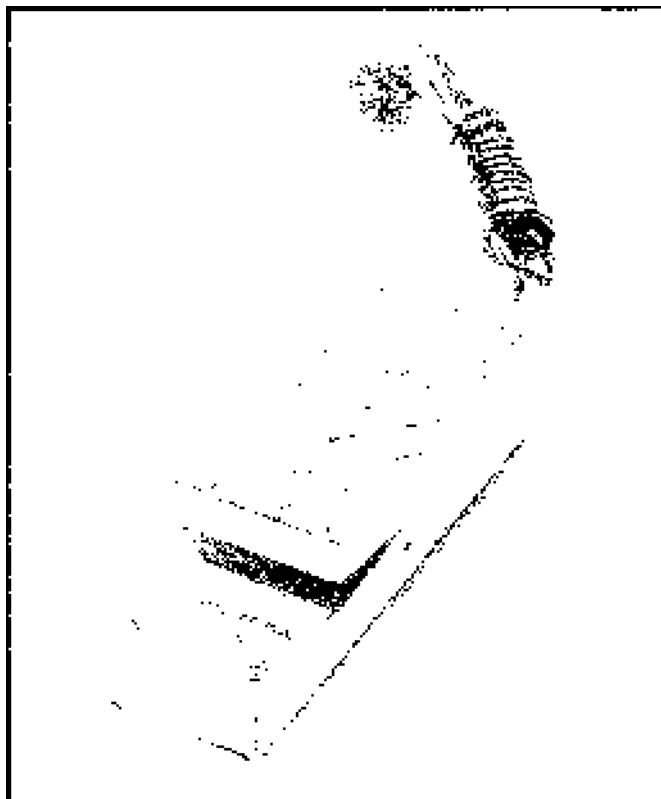
The length of the travel is also slightly more than most other wah-wah I have used, giving a greater degree of control over the sound. The construction of the casing is very solid as is the internal electronics.

The volume pedal has an action that spreads the volume gain equally over the travel, there being no "hot" or "dead" spots. The wah is quiet and also has a very smooth sound with a wide range. Operating the wah and volume together, adds a nice touch when the pedal is used to remove the attack from guitar notes as the timbre changes with the volume.

This pedal makes the battery operated units appear rather poor relatives but it is still fairly compact. If you have a requirement for a high quality wah-wah and/or volume pedal, particularly for studio work, this is the one I recommend.

Keith Spencer-Allen

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Although it appears a complex effects unit at first glance, the Bi-phase is in fact simple to operate. Principally it is two separate phasing units with interconnecting electronics.

The cabinet is rather on the large side, 14 inches wide and 10½ inches deep. The front panel is angled and contains all the controls, while the underside of the cabinet has a threaded fitting enabling the cabinet to be mounted on a mike stand if so desired. There is a footpedal to switch the two phasing units on and off, connected by eight foot of cable and terminating in a five-pin locking DIN connector on the rear of the cabinet.

The controls can be divided into those relevant to the two sections Phasor A and B. Phasor A has depth and feedback controls as well as a speed control for the sweep generator oscillator which may also be switched to pedal operation. The sweep may also be switched to pedal operation.

Phasor B has the identical controls to A — depth, feedback, sweep generator rate and generator waveform. This section has in addition an input selector switch to enable Phasor B to process what is plugged into input B, input A or the output of phasor A. This enables the two phasing units to be run in series, parallel or as two separate units.

The interconnecting electronics also includes a switch for selecting the source of the sweep generator for Phasor B between the generator of B, generator of A or a pedal control. There is also a sweep sync reverse switch to invert the sweep on Phasor B. When this is inverted and the two sections are operated in a stereo mode, the effect is quite unique to this unit.

The Bi-Phase is mains operated with a fixed mains cable and an externally mounted fuse holder. The rear panel also contains the output jack sockets for the A and B sections while the input A and B jacks are on the front. There is no through signal unless the power is on and unless the footswitch is connected, the controls have no effect at all and the signal passes through untouched. Switching in the effect does not alter the output

level at all.

Each of the two phasers are smooth sounding with the effect being quite subtle. With the units run in series, the output of A into input B, it is possible to double up and increase the degree of effect particularly when both phasers are being run from generator 1 and their sweep is in unison. With the generators set on different sweeps in this mode, I found the effect to be not very musically useful unless you are careful.

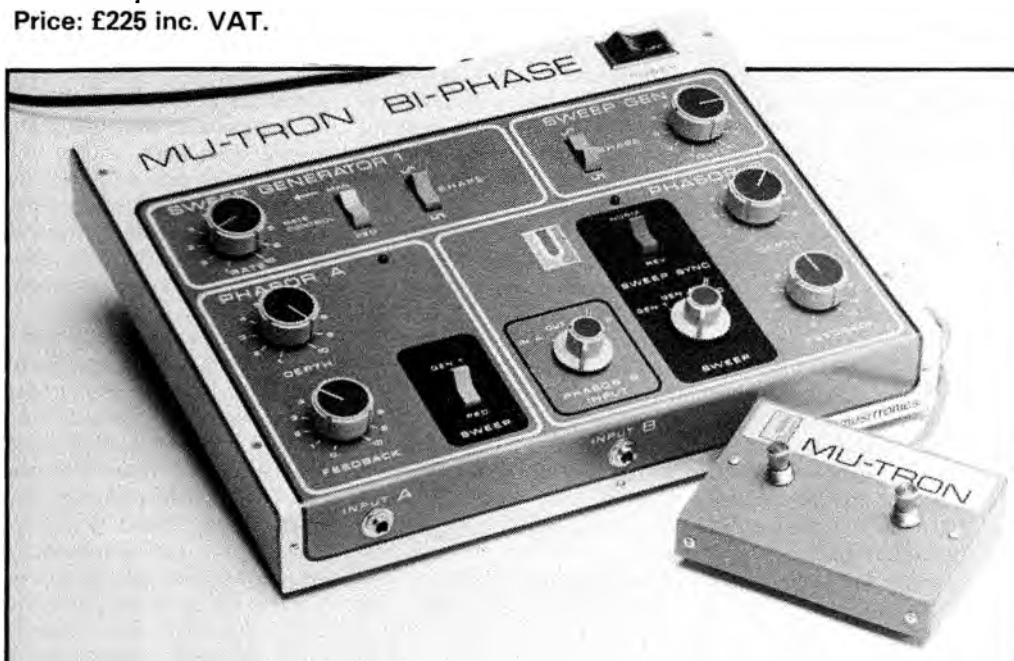
There was no instruction manual at all with the pedal as it was supplied but operationally it is fairly straight forward but I am puzzled as what it is all intended to be used for. The effect on a guitar is good but little that is not available at a lower price. I am informed that this unit is especially good however on a stereo keyboard such as a Fender piano when the sweep generators are working on opposite phases.

Summary

This is a well designed and built unit that functions extremely well but bearing in mind the price, I think that this must be a unit restricted to professionals who need the definitive stereo phasing unit for keyboards but I see little applications outside of this.

Keith Spencer-Allen

Available from:
London Synth Centre
Price: £225 inc. VAT.



SPEAKERCHECK

Compression Drivers - Discussion and Test procedures

Over the next two months we shall be taking our third look at the compression drive unit market since we started this Speakercheck project back in early 1978. In this, the first of three reports on this subject, we shall consider compression drivers in general and set out the testing procedure we shall adopt in the laboratory.

Since we last tested compression drive units — just about 12 months ago, there has been a lot of activity on the market with new products being introduced by several manufacturers, others making improvements to existing designs, and some changing over from Alnico type magnetic systems to ferrite based alternatives due to the escalation in the price of cobalt — an essential ingredient in the manufacture of the Alnico "slug".

So for one reason or another, we have quite a selection of units to test from most of the leading manufacturers, including Electrovoice, JBL, RCF, Emilar, Renkus-Heinz, Gohlion Industries, Fane, HH Acoustics, Peavey, etc. There is little point in re-testing products that have already been through the lab and so we will only be including new or re-designed drivers.

At one time or another, we will have tested and reviewed by far the majority of all drive units on the UK market and for products that we are not including this time round, reference to back issues of IM&RW for January, February, July and August, 1979 will provide information on some 30 more drivers.

Despite the widespread use of "bin and horn" PA systems these days — even by comparatively modest local bands, there remains a certain mystique in respect of compression drive units. Coupled with this is a reluctance on the part of many users to become involved with the technicalities of the animal and this is largely reflected by the inadequate specifications often published by manufacturers.

It seems that so long as

sound can be heard coming out of the horn, then it must be working, but there is far more to it than that. Prices for compression units range from under £20 to over £400 and within that vast variation in cost is an attendant variation in performance.

Where some of the cheaper units — and some of the not-so-cheap units as well for that matter, generate a remarkably irregular and ragged frequency response characteristic at sensitivity levels which are not much better than those of a decent 15 inch cone loudspeaker, some of the more expensive units are coming up with ruler flat response curves to beyond 20kHz and incredibly high sensitivity figures in the order of 120dB for one watt input!

It stands to reason that a sound system fitted with the former type of unit will not even be in the same league as one fitted with the latter type in terms of clarity, accuracy and freedom from feedback — quite apart from the fact that a single driver of the more expensive professional type will do the work of up to 16 (yes, 16!) of the cheaper types and provide better quality into the bargain.

There are of course many applications — probably the greatest part of the market in fact, where smooth response and high sensitivity are not required, for example, when it is desired to extend the treble response of a guitar loudspeaker cabinet or smaller club PA or disco system and for these purposes the general purpose compression driver, fitted to one of the low cost glass fibre or moulded horns will do the job admirably at a total cost of under £60, horn included.

One of the aspects of adding a horn to a loudspeaker system that causes a lot of quite unnecessary hassle is that of crossover networks or filters. In the case of a larger, professional system, the chances are that the system will be bi or tri amped — i.e. two or three way electronic crossovers will be used, or else, one of the expensive proprietary professional

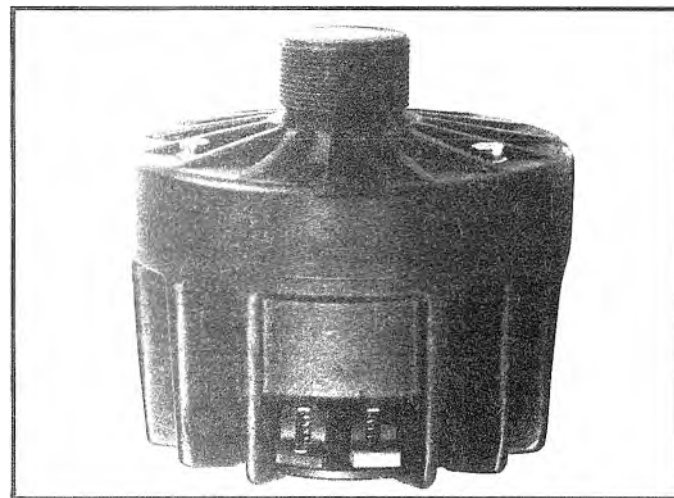
passive crossover networks which alone, cost more than a good quality compression driver.

The difference between a filter and a full crossover is that the filter will just prevent the damaging low frequencies from reaching the compression drive unit while still operating the bass driver as a full range loudspeaker, while a crossover will separate out the bass and treble components from the signal and feed only the bass to the cone driver and only the treble to the compression drive unit.

The difference in cost between these two arrangements is considerable and most commercially made speaker-

12dB/oct will in most cases be too sharp for a balanced sound.

Because most compression drivers are more sensitive than cone loudspeakers, it is usual to use two or more cone drivers to each horn and where this is not the case, it is usually necessary to fit some sort of attenuator between the filter and the compression unit terminals. A number of manufacturers are able to supply ready made filters — complete with built-in attenuators in some instances at very reasonable prices as listed: HH Electronics, Viking Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge. Richard Allen Radio Ltd., Bradford Road, Gomersal, Cleckheaton,



VITAVOX MUSIC MOTOR

cabinet-and-horn systems of moderate cost employ simple filters and not proper crossovers. A full crossover does offer many advantages from a performance aspect, but for most general purpose applications, a simple filter will be adequate, provided that the slope rate is sufficiently high.

The slope rate is the rate at which unwanted frequencies are removed from the compression drive unit and is usually expressed as being so many dB's for each octave below the nominated stated filter frequency. A slope rate of 12dB/octave should be considered the ideal, although some units will be happy with a slope of 6dB/oct provided that the crossover frequency is well above the minimum given for the particular units, while a slope rate much higher than

Yorkshire Fane Acoustics Ltd., Hick Lane, Batley, W. Yorkshire.

Although in most cases these are specifically intended to compliment that manufacturer's drive units, a filter is a filter, and so providing that the filter frequency impedance and slope rate are suitable, there is no reason why any filter cannot be used with any compression driver.

Another problem with compression drivers is that of compatibility with horn throats and while, at the general purpose end of the market most manufacturers have adopted the 1.362" x 18tpi (threads per inch) screw thread coupling, there is no such standardization at the professional end of the market, with JBL, Vitavox, HH, Electro-Voice, Altex, DAS, RCF and Emilar all using

SPEAKERCHECK

their own different bolted flange arrangement.

Fortunately, there is a movement toward using the two JBL flange systems, a one inch diameter coupling with three mounting bolts for smaller drive units and a two inch, four bolt flange system for the larger drivers, as some sort of standard, and throat adaptors are available from Vitavox and from JBL that will enable most types of compression drive unit to be coupled up to a horn with either size of JBL flange, or vice-versa. Similarly, adaptors are available to enable the 1.362" x 18tpi screw thread drivers to be coupled up to the larger flange coupling type of horn, but conversion the other way around in this instance — i.e. where a large diaphragm, flange coupled driver is to be coupled to a 1.362" x 18tpi horn is emphatically not recommended due to the severe distortions which will develop in the reduced throat entry to the horn.

In fact, this very problem of how we were going to couple all these different types of drive units with all their different coupling arrangements up to some sort of standard test horn was one to which some considerable amount of careful thought was given at the time we commenced testing compression drivers towards the end of 1978. After making a number of enquiries, we came up with what turned out to be as near to the perfect solution as we are likely to get short of designing our own special horn and having it custom made — a process which would be prohibitive on cost grounds alone.

In the event, it transpired that Vitavox had been faced with a similar problem some years previously and had adapted one of their industrial horn flares for the purpose. Basically, it is a 42 inch long, circular, true exponential horn with a relatively slow expansion rate and offers really good acoustic loading to the drive unit diaphragm. Further, the horn throat has been constructed in a number of sections, each terminating in one of the "standard" flange or screw thread coupling ar-

rangements, all of which bolt together to make up the full length horn for the smallest throat entries.

Due to its form of construction, the horn is much less "live" than many cast aluminium radials and apart from the presence of a known small resonance around 1Kz, it is ideal for our purposes. The Vitavox laboratory horn is not commercially available, nor was it designed for any particular type of drive unit, and



ELECTROVOICE 1823/M

its use would seem to be the fairest and most convenient way to test compression drivers.

After all, compression drivers are never used without a horn, so it makes sense to test them on a horn — especially when the horn in question has better characteristics than the majority of commercially available horns anyway, and a natural cut-off frequency which is well below that at which any compression drive unit is ever likely to be used and will therefore ensure constant acoustic loading right down to the lowest practicable frequencies and beyond. The horn details and dimensions are shown in the illustration for those who



ELECTROVOICE 1823

may wish to check the facts out for themselves and our thanks are due to Vitavox for their very willing assistance in allowing us the use of their horn.

For our test procedure then, each compression drive unit is coupled to the appropriate throat entry on the standard horn, which is hung in free space in the anechoic chamber of GEC-Hirst Research Laboratories at Wembley and a calibrated measuring microphone is placed at a distance of one meter on the central forward axis of the horn.

First of all, the impedance of the driver is plotted out, and from this curve, we can usually tell the range of values over which the impedance varies and the nominal fundamental resonance of the driver. It is useful to know whether the resonant frequency is inside or outside the useful working range of the drive unit.

Secondly, a sine wave signal, at a voltage calculated to dissipate one watt in the drive unit voice coil at the

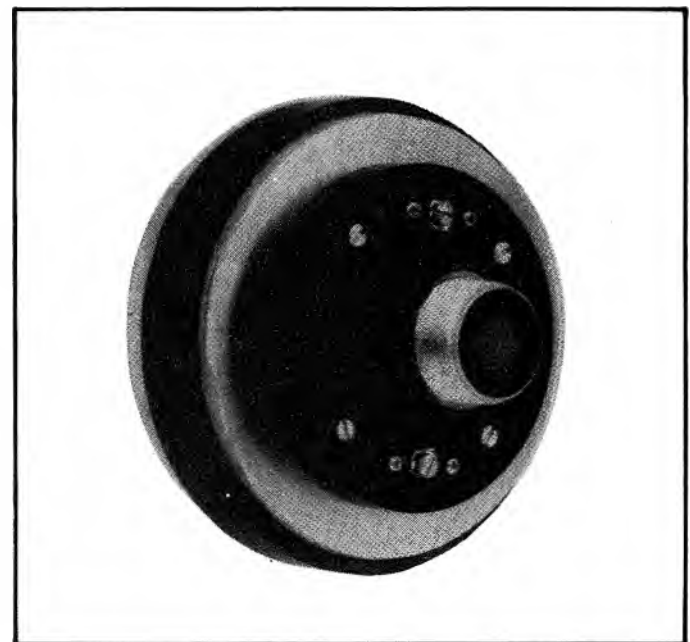
we are also able to calculate the basic sensitivity of the driver when coupled to our standard horn. Remember that this could well be different on other types of horn, but nevertheless serves as a valid and useful comparison.

Lastly, the swept sine wave test is repeated, but this time, at a voltage calculated to dissipate 10 per cent of the maker's stated system power rating, or the maker's stated



DAS M-100

continuous sine wave power rating (whichever is the greater) at the maker's stated nominal impedance, and from these curves, we look to see if the unit is likely to meet its power rating and at what levels



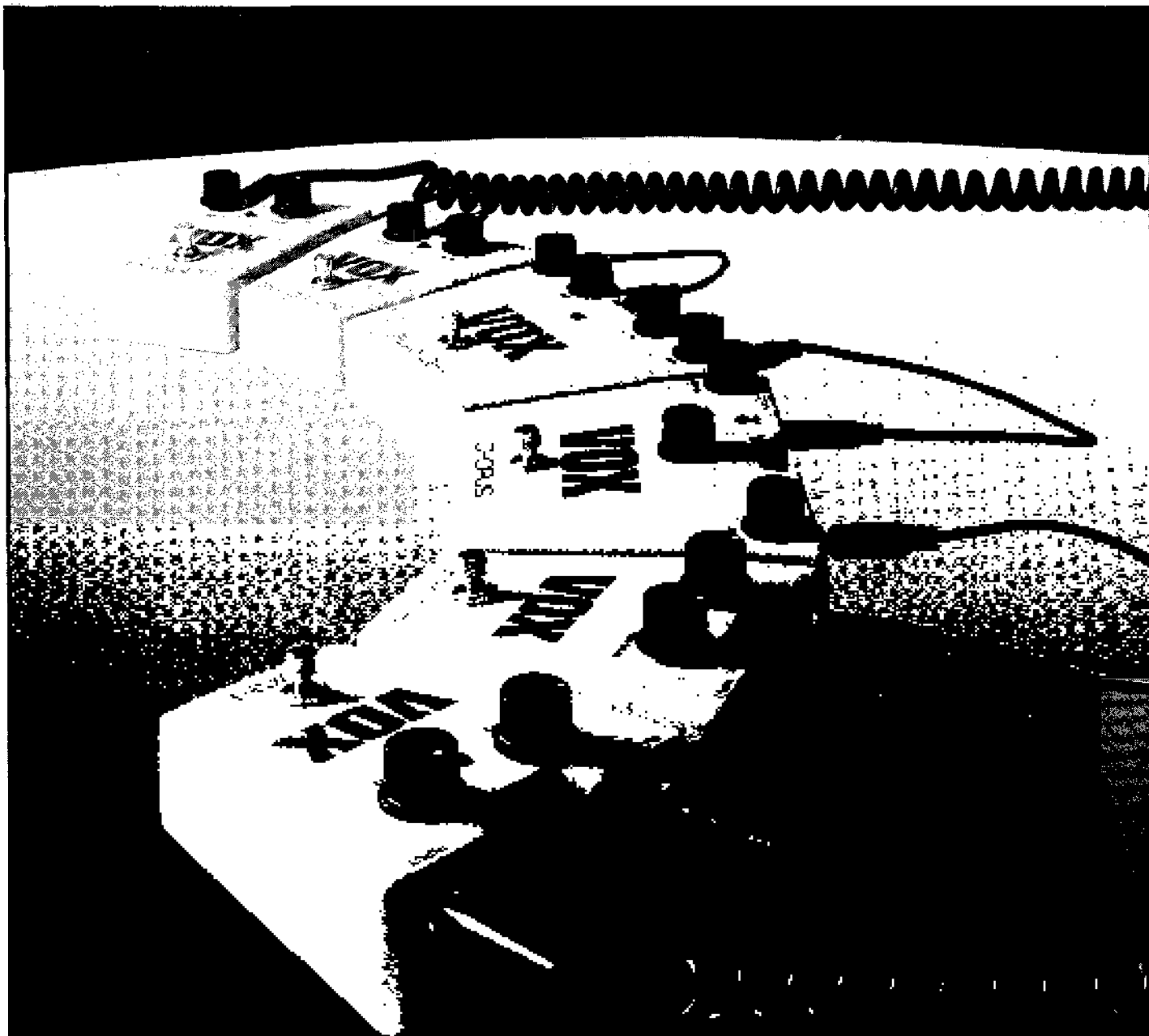
RCF TW 101

maker's stated nominal impedance, is swept from one octave below the maker's stated lower frequency limit through to 20kHz and the frequency response of the driver is plotted out and published in our review. From this curve,

of total harmonic distortion.

Where a unit has lower frequency response limit that is much below 1kHz, then the 10 per cent of system power rating may be increased to 20 per cent in cases where it is

continued page 83



The New Range of VOX Effects Pedals

Sound processing has come a long way since Vox first set the pace and Vox are again leading the way, this time with a new range of pedals, designed for today's sophisticated musician. Vox innovation has created a new practical shape — a wedge — which means that the pedals can be used together in a natural semi-circle, and the leads and the phantom power connections are all at the back, well out of the way. It's simple and obvious, but it took Vox to think of it!

But the new Vox pedal is not "just a pretty face!" The electronics are pure 1980s with LED indicators, low noise levels, and external phantom power possibilities. The switching

is ultra-clean and ultra-quiet, and Vox thoughtfully include a pad to fit the bottom of each unit to eradicate any slip.

The range includes a super versatile "Phaser", a warm valve "Distortion", a super funk "Wah", a clean "Compressor", the sweeping "Flanger", and the ethereal "Chorus". All are battery powered as standard and all are distinct in the new Vox livery.

How much? You'll be surprised. Vox have designed not only pedals you'll want, but pedals you can afford!

Prices run from £27.00 to £58.00 including VAT. Check them out, they were designed by musicians from us to you.



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SPEAKERCHECK

continued from page 81

considered likely that the unit may be used over the lower middle frequencies, but this will only apply to the larger type of unit, with large diameter diaphragms, intended for coupling to the larger types of horn which are capable of properly handling the mid ranges. In cases where this option has been invoked, this will be clearly shown in our results presentation.

For those interested, the equipment used in the laboratory is as follows:-

- Bruel & Kjaer ½" capacitor microphone**
- Bruel & Kjaer Hetrodyne Analyser type 2010**
- Bruel & Kjaer Distortion Measurement Unit type 1902**
- Bruel & Kjaer Chart Recorder type 2305**
- HH Electronics Power Amplifier type TPA-100D**



Ken in the Lab with his testing gear

Vitavox 190Hz. Exponential, circular laboratory horn
Various: Cups of coffee and tea, buttered current

buns, crusty cheese rolls, etc as provided by the excellent GEC-Hirst tea ladies!



Having gone through that little lot, I am afraid that there is no room for any actual test results this month — quite apart from the fact that we are not booked into the lab until after this edition goes to press, so having whetted your appetite to find out all about compression drive units, I am afraid that you must hold your patience now until the August issue!

Ken Dibble

Ken Dibble MIOA is a musician with a background in engineering and manufacturing sound equipment. He now works as an electro-acoustic consultant.

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DRUMCHECK

Hoshino Professional 5075 £399 inc. VAT

Here's another of the cheaper sets we promised to bring you from time to time. As per usual for sets of this price, this one originates in the Far East and many of its component parts look very similar to those to be found on the other economy-line sets.

This month's set is our normal standard (for review purposes) five drum kit, but I know Hoshino make concert toms too, from six to 16 inches in diameter, so if you so desired, you could have a 13-drum set at a highly competitive price.

The company in the past have been seen to concentrate on the economy, or dare I say "bread and butter" end of the market. This however, is their stab at the professional end and I think in fairness, what they mean with this set is the semi-pro area, because at just under £400 there's no way the set could be confused with, say a comparable sized Ludwig at...

No, what we have here is something aimed, pricewise, at the top of the economy line. They do have more expensive sets which I plan to review later in the year.

There's not an awful lot of

history to write about the drums since by and large little is known about them. They appear to have been available in Britain for the past 10 years and do not, I am reliably informed, have anything whatsoever to do with Hoshino Gakki Ten Inc who are the maker's of the more expensive and expansive Tama lines.

So this set is called the 5075.68 (the .68 designated fine silver finish) and consist of 22-inch bass drum; 12 by 8, 13 by 9 and 16 by 16 tom toms, a five-inch metal shell snare drum, two cymbal stands, hi-hat and bass drum pedal and of course a stand for the snare drum. Also we get one pair of sticks and one pair of brushes.

Bass Drum

The 22 by 14 inch bass drum has eight pressed-steel claws and cast T-handled tensioners per head and a very deep trenched pair of chromed counterhoops made from metal and inlaid with plastic to match the rest of the kit.

One hoop is factory fitted with a rubber block to locate the bass drum pedal. These hoops are interesting in that instead of being chamfered on their outside edges these have

very straight, right angled sides. The claws, however, are shaped to accommodate them adequately.

The spurs are made from thickish tubing with a cast, spring ratchet block, bolted to the shell to maintain and set their angle of incidence and they have a very large wing bolt to lock them in position. Unlike many other spurs, these particular ones have only a rubber crutch tip at their ends — not an alternative spike.

Tom toms

The 12-inch drum has six square headed tension screws per head, so has the 13 and the floor tom has 16 in all. All drums have triple flange hoops with larger than usual slots to take these screws. All drums have internal under-batter-head operating dampers with a good sized knob to lock them in place.

Accessories

Hoshino's snare drum stand has a good strong tripod base made from flat steel with substantial and very business-like looking rubber feet. It has a basket-type adjustable mechanism like the old Buck Rogers which locks via a wing bolt below the basket (and within a metal tube).

The playing angle adjustment has a large cast ratchet with a spring inside it which locks with a swing nut like the old Rogers flattened rod type. The gripping arms of the basket are sheathed in rubber, and the height of the business end of the stand is locked by a smallish cast wing bolt tapped directly into a cast boss which pushes and deforms an under-sized spring-steel metal ring which is inside the boss. This locks the height at the desired position. It is a good steady stand which works well and doesn't have some of the "basket shake" which some far more expensive stands are plagued with.

The hi-hat has the same flat tripod legs as the snare drum stand and there's a larger cast wing bolt to hold the legs out in position and they have the same substantial rubber feet. Hoshino fit a pressed steel clamp to their top tube to ensure correct height adjustment and their plastic bottom cymbal cup has the usual screw



operated tilting facility.

It's a centre pull model with a two-piece cast sand-blasted foot plate and a toe stop. The plate is joined to the mechanism with a short plastic strap which, to eliminate wear, is doubled around a stirrup bar fixed to the centre rod.

The action, as you would expect on a set of this price, is not adjustable, but the cast saddle base does have an adjustable spur. Hoshino's top cymbal clutch is turned, has a cast wing nut to lock it, two thick felts and two substantial, milled edge locking washers to lock the whole clutch "sandwich" together. The centre pull action by the way, is not the sort where the centre rod screws into the bottom, but instead is loose fixed and articulated like the old Gretsch ones.

Snare drum

This drum is 15 by five inches with eight double-ended nut boxes, triple flange hoops and of course square headed tensioners. The drum has an internal damper too, and a cast adjustable, cam action snare release with a pressed steel lever (when in the off position this strainer rattled, but in the on position it was fine).

It was fixed to the 20-strand snares with a plastic strip. The shell itself was quite thin, with an inverse bent over flange and a slight snare bed set into it. As usual the shell is strengthened with three slight indentation beads around its centre.

This drum, as all the others, has Remo Soundmaster heads. I notice in the catalogue that Hoshino produce a six-and-a-half inch deep snare drum for their large "pro" sets.

Sounds

To be honest, I was surprised by the sound of the snare drum. It was quite a lot more "ballsy" than I expected. It, like all cheap snare drums, does not have an extraordinary amount of definition at high volume — it doesn't really roar. However, for medium type playing volumes, it seems pretty good.

As I boringly write every time I look at a cheap set, better quality heads would make for a better sound, especially

on the snare drum, but unfortunately this would also increase the price and push it way over the £400 mark.

The tom toms sounded strong enough even with the Soundmasters on — they really were good and thick. The bass drum too sounded OK with the original equipment, but it would get a stronger, more definite sound with Remo Ambassadors, CS or Evans Rock.

The shells themselves are made from six plies of an oriental light coloured wood which resembles birch and are much better finished off inside than the last Hoshinos I reviewed. They are actually very very clean for a mid-range set of this type.

Hoshino's bass drum is "as near as dammit" the same as Pearl's and the latest Gretsch. It has a horseshoe-shaped cast framework with two screw adjustable (but unsprung) spurs with a nice thick leather strap and a two-piece cast footplate and a toe stop to match the hi-hat stands.

The expansion spring is stretched up towards the player and away from the pedal and this cast "stretcher" is joined directly to the beater's cam axle and so acts as a lever (lockable with a pair of drum key operated screws) to position the beater closer to the head but without disturbing the "throwing arc".

The Hoshino differs slightly from the Pearl in that it clamps to the loop in the old fashioned way with a single thumb screw below the footplate (Pearl's has a more remote clamping system from halfway up the frame itself). Anyway the feel of the pedal is very like Pearl's and except for the very coarse hairy beater they fit, I like the pedal just as much. This beater is, of course, adjustable in height for larger or smaller bass drums.

As one would expect, the Hoshino cymbal stands have exactly the same flattened steel tripod legs as the other supports (and the same large feet). The stand is in three stages, each with the cast boss with spring ring insert and Rogers type wing bolt.

The tilter is cast and internally sprung and is sensibly long for really unencumbered cymbal placement. It's finished off

with the usual felts, metal washers and wing nut. Hoshino supply two of these stands with their sets. They also make a boom cymbal stand for their more sophisticated "professional" sets which have double-braced legs and what would appear to be slightly wider bore tubes.

Hoshino's tom tom legs are very good and really surprised me. They are without doubt the thickest available from the Orient. Fabricated from solid rod and with a double bend at the bottom with really thick crutch tips — they locate into cast receiver blocks fixed to the tom tom shell which have internal eye bolts and large wing nuts to lock them solid.

The legs themselves have an interesting knurling feature on them. It's in three bands with roughly a quarter of an inch between, to give a setting up guide each time.

So the only item left to comment on is the double tom tom holder. This, in appearance, is very like Pearl's professional 900 series model and cosmetically looks very good. It's basically the old Trixon/Sonor idea of two tubes joined together via a splined sandwich.

Hoshino's wide bored tubes are joined by a cast ratchet which is sprung and the two halves have a wing nut and bolt through them to secure the playing article. These two arms locate into and penetrate cast blocks — a double one fixed to the bass drum shell and a single fixed to the tom toms. Like Pearl's, these blocks have one part of a pipe type clamp cast into them and the other

half, or semi circle, joins to this with a pair of drum key operated sprung screws.

Each of the arms has a lockable memory type clamping ring to make sure the drums are set up in the same way each time. This holder works well and Hoshino must have spent quite a lot of bread tooling up for it. It's not quite as sophisticated as Pearl's, but it ain't that bad.

Appearance

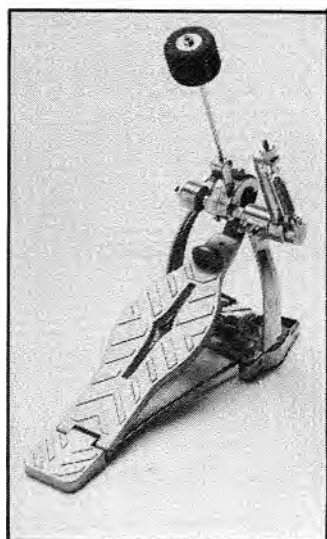
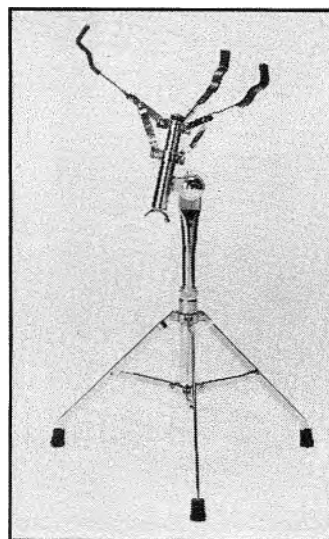
The drums looked very good externally and were, as I said, nicely finished inside. The outside finish I saw was called "fine silver" and looks very professional. They make eight finishes, all plastic, and all are pretty good (although I'm not too sure about silver silky).

Their catalogue has a set on the front of it which actually has a natural wood finish and looks extremely good. However, I couldn't see this listed in the catalogue, so I presume it's for Japanese home consumption.

Hoshino seem to have changed their badges — they now have black and silver embossed rectangular ones. The cheap set and the 22-inch professional set have these, but the larger sized pro set has circular embossed ones which is a little confusing.

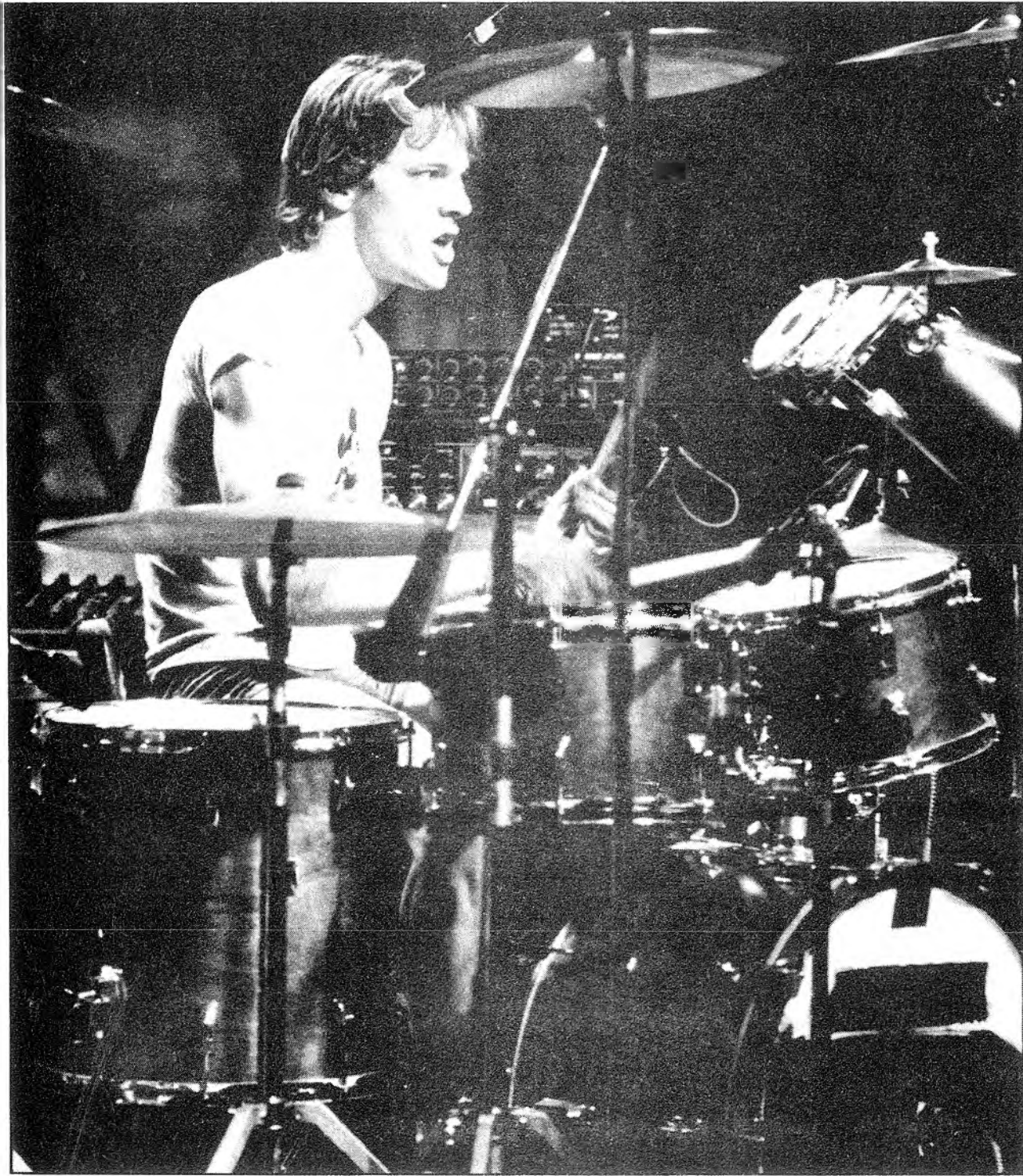
Henry Roberts

In last month's Drumcheck unfortunately a few gremlins crept in and you may have noticed some errors. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.



STEWART COPELAND

ON THE BEAT



Unless your senses have been impaired for the last 12 months, or you have been orbiting Venus in the latest space probe you cannot help but have noticed the appearance of a band called the Police.

Not since the days of the Beatles has a group gained such mass popularity in such a short time. Even in the heady world of pop music, their rise to fame takes some beating and believing. Their story has already become a legend.

Their formation from three diverse musical backgrounds ... failure to break through in Britain ... flight to the USA ... hitting the big time ... triumphant return... followed by the conquest of the rest of the world, is already well known.

Reads like a fairytale doesn't it, and I'm sure Sting, Andy and Stewart have pinched themselves more than once during the past year to make sure that it all really is happening. Even now the fans are eagerly devouring every bit of re-packaged vinyl while waiting for new Police output.

The success of the Police relies on many factors, not the least being hard work and the fact of being in the right place at the right time. But probably the biggest factor is the sheer breadth of their appeal.

In the USA, which is still basically a conservative nation, they were the acceptable face of New Wave, over here they have scored on other levels. Their songs are good, their lyrics interesting and there was a whole army of females who were waiting to fall in love with Sting. They were also a band musos could relate to because they could really play!

It wasn't just the fact that individually they were good musicians, but the sound produced together made nonsense of the theory that the only way to get a full sound from a three piece is to turn everything up. On stage the Police material ranges from out and out rockers to dub reggae, but whatever they do the sound always seems full and balanced.

Once again, it's all down to clever use of effects, empathy and musicianship. All of a sudden people want to sound like that and want to know how they do it. In the drum stakes Stewart Copeland is a name which will probably be quoted as a "major influence" by young drummers before too long.

Forget all stereotyped images of the drummer in the band being the down-to-earth self-effacing artisan. Stewart Copeland is a brash bold American, not in the flash overpowering sense, but he exudes a confidence which comes from knowing he is good at what he does.

He's a seen-it-all, done-it-all-before type character who, you get the impression, would have made it in some sphere



of rock and roll whatever happened. God knows he tried hard enough having been a disc jockey, a tour manager, in addition to running a record company and publishing his own magazine.

"I never thought I'd be a musician, it just turned out that I was so prodigiously good at it. I was left with no alternative but to pursue it as a source of income because I'd done everything else in the business. I just never thought I could handle the commitment that it takes to be a musician because it does actually mean that you've got to take your shirt off and get right in there. You can't keep your hands dry as a musician."

It was Stewart in fact who formed the Police in 1977 and he remains a major driving force behind the band with his singing and writing as well as his playing. He is also one of those rare drummers who manages to project on stage, and contribute to the character as well as the sound of the band.

The fact that he is American, and the band first broke big in the States led many people to think that the Police were a US outfit. However, in reality he has probably spent more time out of the US than in it.

Being the son of a serviceman he grew up in Beirut, where his exposure to rock and roll was definitely second hand. However, it was enough for the young Copeland to become addicted, and he soon worked out a good way to get gigs.

"I had to go out and snoop my way onto other people's drum kits and borrow other people's gear. I developed a whole technique of getting my way into a group by sitting in at rehearsals and saying, 'hey, it sounded great guys, I really like it, I wish I could be as good as you.'

"I'd watch the drummer and say 'oh, how do you do that bit, can I have a try?' And I'd always get it off better than he could and eventually learn all the songs for the gig better than he could. In the end I'd not only nick his gig, but I'd say, 'hey, can I borrow your kit?'"

In the meantime his father, himself an old jazzer, sent him to local drum teachers, and eventually when Stewart

came to England he went to Max Abrahams for some tuition. Years of jamming and just playing around doing a variety of things led to his becoming the drummer with Curved Air, after a spell as their road manager, in the mid-Seventies.

If nothing else, it provided him with the opportunity to invest in a "real" drum kit. His first ever kit was a turquoise pearl Premier, which he still has, but the record company advance proved too much of a temptation to the ambitious young Copeland.

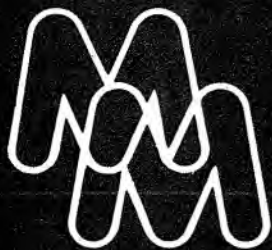
"It was the first time I could afford a real drum set, so I just went out and got the biggest drum kit you ever saw. It was a gigantic perspex Ludwig and it was really huge. I dented my knuckles a lot and was really disappointed. I tried a lot of other stuff but it was all the same poor quality and I looked around thinking that somebody must be doing it better by now."

Stewart considered all the kits to be too flimsy and concluded that they must have been designed by ex-jazz musicians who are retired and now work in drum factories designing drums. Undaunted he set about scouring London for the right kit, and also hoping for a commercial deal.

"I figured now I was a prestigious member of Curved Air, I could do a deal. I found these drums called Tama which I'd never heard of before, and certainly nobody else was using. Their stands were really huge and thick, just a completely different thing, the difference was just like chalk and cheese — these big meaty stands, and the drums were nine ply.

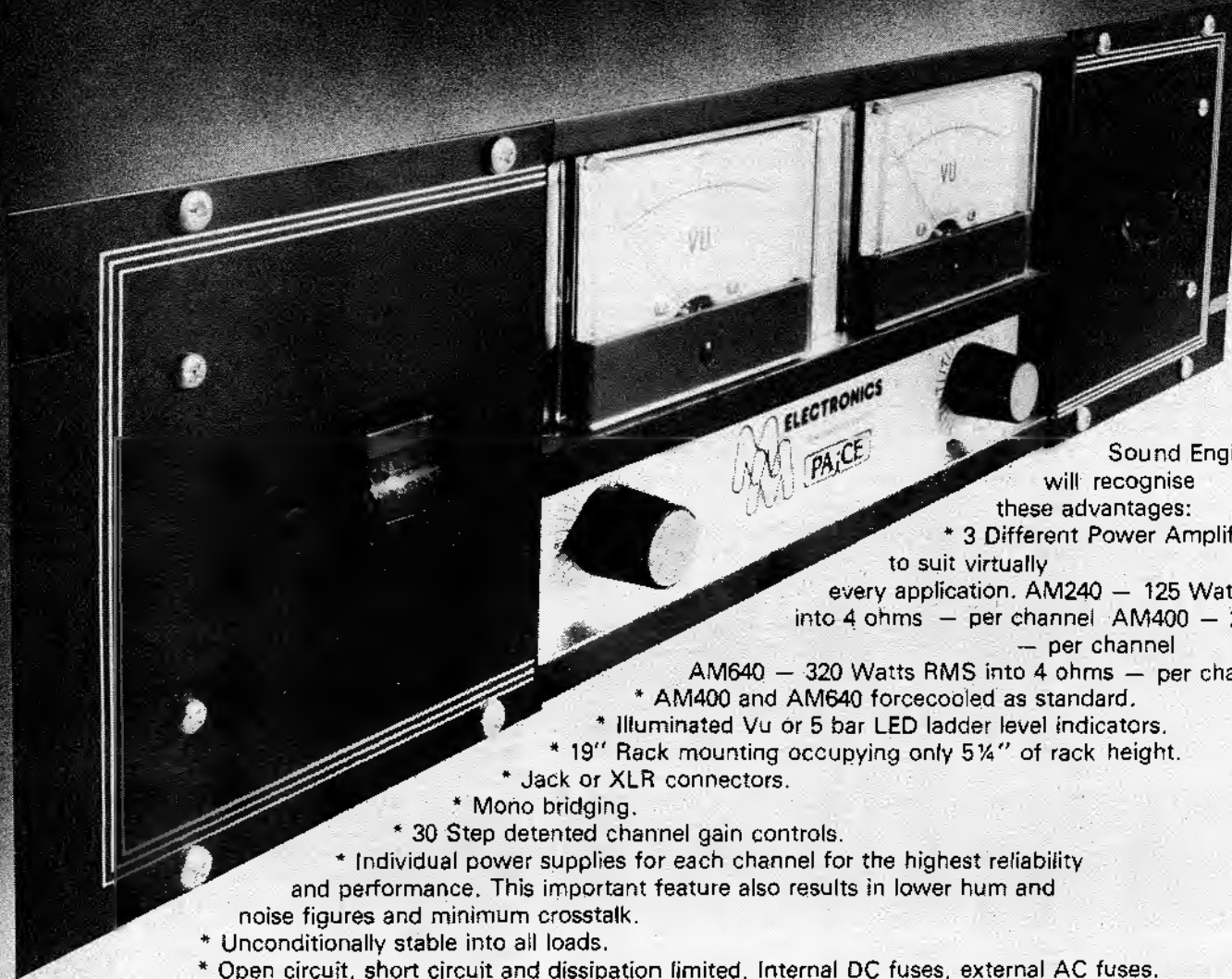
"I'd had it with big drums, so I got a really small set and did a deal with them. It was the first deal I ever did and they'd never heard of Curved Air, they'd never heard of anybody. I sent them these press clippings I had, so they said 'says in print he's famous, let's give him some drums, he's the best we've got!'"

"So they gave me a drum set, and immediately the first night I used it the PA guy came backstage and said, 'please burn your Ludwig because all of a sudden I'm able to get a good sound out of your drums for the first time.'"



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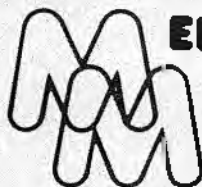


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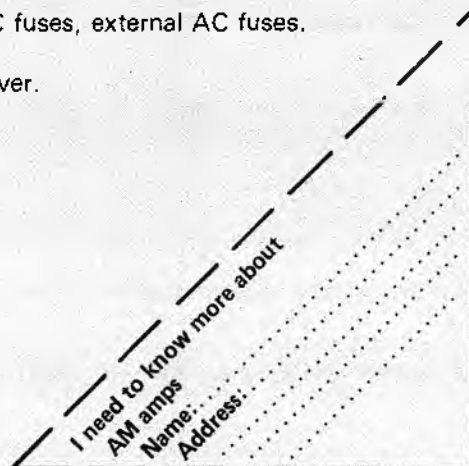
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Following the demise of Curved Air, and fired by the punk explosion, Stewart got together with Sting, recruited Andy Summers on guitar and the Police were born.

The rest, as they say is history, but throughout he has stuck with Tama using that original kit during the first 18 months to two years with the Police. Considering the hammering that he gives them, that's a fair assessment of the lasting power of Tama. He bought another identical set in the States which he was at great pains to point out he actually bought. "The Police were not so rich and famous then, which shows that they actually are the best drums." He has since added a third identical kit.

Stewart maintains that his kit is based on one that you can go out and buy, but he is constantly adding things to it and changing drums around. Consequently having asked for a run down of his kit, we only got as far as a 22 inch bass drum and his smallest tom tom which is just eight inches. He is far more into talking about the effects that he uses on his drums.

"The most important gadget that I've got, that sets my drums apart from other drum kits, is the echo. Microphones send half their signals to the PA and the other half to another little mixer which goes into an echo box, a Roland Space Echo. So a repeat comes back to me off the drum set and you can build up totally new rhythms that have never been heard before.

"It's had an incredible affect on my playing. I control it all myself with a footswitch next to the hi hat which turns off and on, and I can just bring it in for just one little lick and suddenly there's two people falling down the stairs, and then it just goes out again.

"Or I can use it all the way through a song for a rhythm to build on. It comes up with rhythms that you'd just never arrive at on your own." He originally bought the echo unit to use with a guitar, but decided to experiment with it on the drum kit as well.

"I thought, why not put a microphone on the snare drum and put that back through the echo and see if I can get some dub on stage. I was going to do some onstage dub, which is actually what it all is, and it worked really well.

"I gradually delved into it and modified the system and perfected it to the point where the whole drum sound goes into the mixer so it can be processed accurately. I also use a digital echo now, which does it really accurately. The two signals are identical, whereas before, you'd have the sound of the drum coming through the PA and then the repeat sound would not be nearly as good and would only be on some drums. Now it's perfect, the bass drum



comes through the PA BOOM BOOM BOOM and it's a *real* drum sound."

Another gadget he uses is a synthesized drum, but not the usual kind. "Tama make one which is pretty neat. Most people use that awful sound, but I've got one on the bass drum which is a contact mike really low down. When my bass drum lands it sounds like Godzilla. It's just deeper than any bass drum you've heard before because it's electronically enhanced."

While acknowledging the importance of these effects to the overall Police sound, Stewart was quick to point out that they conquered America with none of these added frills. "We went out there with no record company, nothing, just the three of us — guitar, bass and drums. Now that we have these gadgets we're able to do a lot more."

It is obvious that he believes the key to everything is not in gadgets but in the player's ability as a musician and feel for the instrument. He acknowledges the advantage of some formal training, like teaching you how to hold the sticks properly, but only as far as it enables you to progress faster on the instrument.

"Handling the instrument is only a third or less of what's required to be a good musician. I mean, how fast you can move your fingers and all those things I was taught are only important up to a very small point. What's really important is whether or not you've got anything to say on the instrument. That's the whole mystique — if you've

got talent or not in the first place."

Being successful has meant that he can now have his own drum roadie, which has produced some interesting situations. He remembers one of the early roadies in particular: "I once showed up at a gig after coming back from the States, and the new English drum roadie was there, and his previous gig had been working for Billy Cobham.

"I thought, 'wait a minute, there's three thousand people shouting and screaming and going berserk in front of me and one po faced roadie sitting behind me. The amount of time devoted to thinking about either one or the other was... I don't even wanna tell the truth!'"

Stewart has no complaints about his current crew, in fact if something happened to the band, the roadies could do more than an adequate depping job. Apparently they are all excellent musicians who take great delight in doing a Police medley at soundchecks.

"Whenever we show up they're playing 'Message In A Bottle' and 'Can't Stand Losing You' and doing it really well with all the same inflections."

And with no new Police gigs or vinyl likely before Autumn, I reckon the lads better watch out or the roadies may find themselves in big demand.

**DAVID
LAWRENSON**

DRUM NEWS

The NEARY DRUM TORQUE is actually a precision tuning item which the drum world has known to be feasible for some time but it's not until now that a manufacturer has got it together to produce the thing.

Remo's literature for the past five-to-10 years has included a photograph of one of his technicians playing a drum with clock-type pressure gauges fitted to each tension screw.

Basically, then, this is a sophisticated drum key shaped like an elongated spinning top which fits comfortably into the hand with a rotary-gauge on top graduated from 0 to 25kg/cm. All one really has to do is read off the number (say eight) and make sure that every other tension screw matches this number. It's simplicity itself to use, especially since the manufacturers supply a chart with the unit. They also thoughtfully furnish you with a selection of interchangeable, different headed "bits". A square one, screwdriver slotted one and a "U" shaped one to fit a bass drum, "T" handled, tension screw. It is, of course, essential to make sure that the instrument is measuring the head tension and not just the bolt tension and to this end the Neary Company recommend removing each tension screw, cleaning and then lightly oiling their threads and bottoms. One then makes each bolt finger-tight and then starts to tension in two kg/cm turns until the desired final tension number is reached. Neary stipulate a slightly different tensioning sequence to what is generally considered the normal one but I found that straight across diametrically and then round one and back again worked fine.

The relative values they give in their chart are interesting since in some cases they conflict with standard tuning practice; they list higher than, lower than, and average values, and in each case the tom tom tensions do not match numerically for batter and sympathetic head and appear to vary in a ratio of approximately 3:2. Mind you, these are only guide lines and the player is expected to work his own tensionings out. For the snare-drum they always

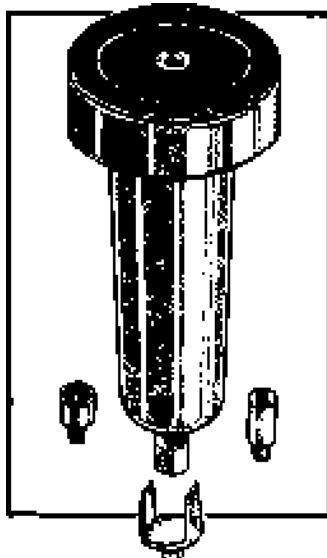
advocate 6kg/cm on the snare head and either 6, 8 or 10 on the batter head according to taste.

They list "funky" tunings too, which in the case of the tom toms involves adjusting any two opposing tensioners to roughly one half of the value of the others. In the case of the bass drum they specify the tension on the top two bolts should be two thirds the value of the other bolts (on the batter head). The way to check the tension on any head before a gig is as a guitarist tunes his instrument. He decreases tension on the string and then takes it up to the desired pitch. The same process should be used for *drum torque* — reduce the tension first then tighten to the desired number. So, in conclusion, *drum torque* is indeed a very useful device which should prove very popular, especially at the professional end of the market. Not so much because of its price (£26.45) but mainly because pros are the guys who are fastidious enough to want (and need) to have their drums accurately tensioned in the first place.

Studio players, engineers and record producers will find *drum torque* a boon to enable positive tuning and more importantly create a norm for the industry to work with.

The actual unit is made in Kentville, Canada and has an A.B.S. type black plastic outer cover and internals of metal. One recommendation I'd like to make is that it should come in some sort of permanent box or pouch to protect it while it's in the drummer's trap case.

Henry Roberts



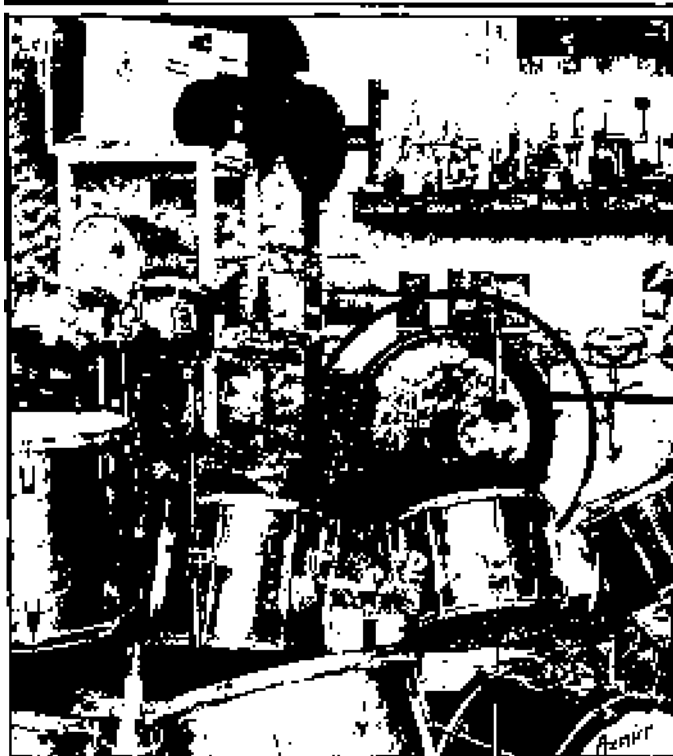
Dear Drum Forum,

I really do feel compelled to reply to the letters published in IM from Chris Stevens and Oliver Link and add the cryptic comments, "well done gentlemen, you got Sonor mentioned yet again"! But joking aside who are we trying to kid? Dealers? Drummers? I think not, the time has long passed when everybody accepted verbatim the golden words issued forth by drum endorsement superstars. Drummers today are much more critical and are quite capable of making decisions in a much more constructive way.

The point I am trying to make is that if some manufacturers would stop the "in fighting" and get on with the real business of offering quality products at reasonable prices, that drummers today can afford, it would be of benefit to everyone concerned.

One final point, stop taking up precious columns on such matters and leave the space for more relevant topics for drummers, from drummers.

Glyn Thomas,
Director,
Pearl Music Ltd.
London.



Stix Drum Centre in New Road, Peterborough, maintain that they are not like the usual music shop, where the unsuspecting customer is pounced on as soon as he pokes his head round the door. Chances are, the first thing you'll get is a cup of coffee.

The place is run and owned by Jim Luff, an ex session drummer who remembers when shops weren't all cut throat super stores. "Most guys who come here," says Jim, "seldom go anywhere else after". According to Jim, it's more of a drummers' meeting place with customers usually becoming friends.

The shop is on two levels, with parking on the forecourt, and looks deceptively small from the outside. Approximately 30 kits are in stock at any time and the shop has main agencies for nearly every drum make. They're all set up as well, not stacked away on shelves. You can come and try virtually every drum on the market.

Stix has just started importing some American and European accessories and bits and bobs of percussion which are not available in this country as yet, and these, like everything else, will be competitively priced. They try and strike a happy medium between discounts and service. The latter, with spares in stock for nearly everything, seems more important than price to most drummers nowadays.

They have a service department where they re-cover and repair and customise, re-lap calf heads, have their own sticks made and are open six days a week. The shop is only six miles off the A1, and what with that, and the major roads from the Midlands, regular customers come from literally miles away.

The biggest thing about it, is its sound.



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The CUSTOM SOUND 703 Combo.

The new Model 703 provides the musician with a compact yet powerful combination amplifier. It is of exceptionally versatile design suitable for the smallest club to large on-stage performances. The Model 703 houses a single channel amplifier capable of producing the widest variety of musical sounds from your instruments.

A unique input configuration provides Hi-Lo sensitivity inputs which may be switched for normal (flat) response or bright for additional treble boost. An input gain is provided to match the amp to the output for your pick-up and to allow for a 'clean' sound or heavier overdriven sound as desired.

An active four band tone network of exceptional range enables complete control of your sound to be achieved whilst the overtone control allows for variation of the levels of harmonic distortion to achieve the level of colouration and sustain required by the musician.

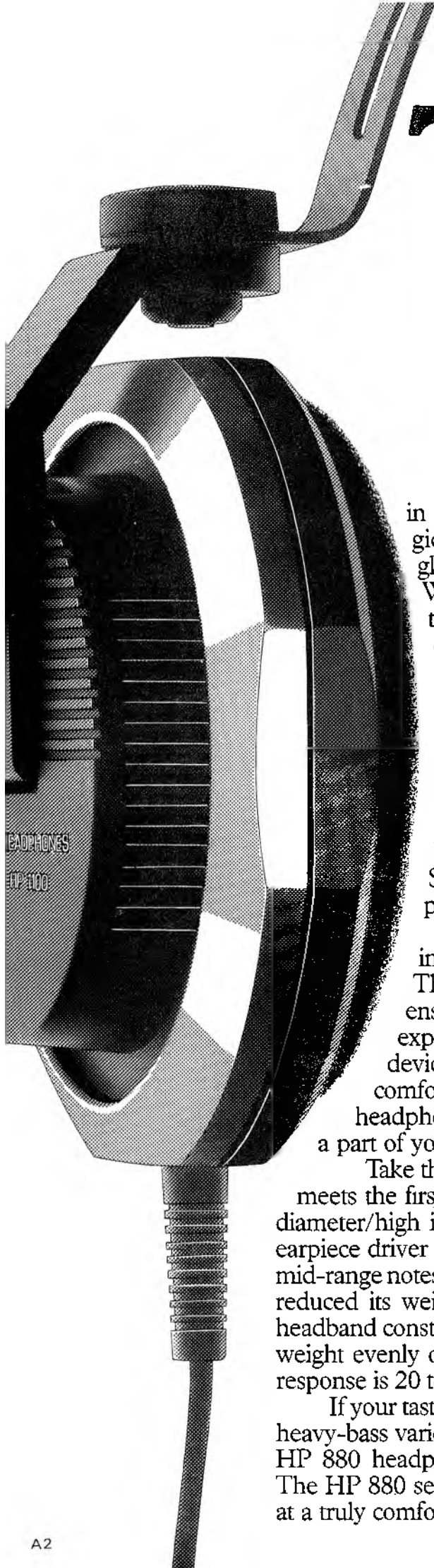
The two high sensitivity 10" speakers give a penetrating yet full sound and enable the whole unit to be kept to compact and exceptionally portable dimensions.

The Model 703 can deliver 75w RMS into its own speakers yet may be coupled to a further 8 ohm enclosure for a full 100w output.

SPECIFICATION

High & Lo Sensitivity Inputs : Bright/Normal Switch : Input Gain Control : Master Volume 4 Band
Tone Controls : Bass, Mid-Lo, Mid : 2 x 10" High Sensitivity Speakers : 75w RMS into own enclosure
(8ohm) : 100w RMS into further 8 ohm additional cabinet : weight only 25 kg :
Dimensions only 32 x 61 x 46 cm (32 x 61 x 54 cm inc. castors)

The JVC hearin



At JVC we don't believe in restricting our technological know-how to a few glamorous, high-cost items. We take the same painstaking care over our enormous range of audio accessories.

They're a sight for sore ears.

Right between the ears

We know how important private listening has become to the music lover. So we make sure our headphones live up to our hi-fi.

There are two essentials in headphone designing. Their acoustic device must ensure delivery of rich sonic expressions. Their fitting device must allow for a steady, comfortable placement. All our headphones are built to become a part of you – your JVC ears.

Take the HP 1100 for example. It meets the first requirement with large diameter/high impedance (100 ohms) earpiece driver units for rich basses, clear mid-range notes and brilliant highs. We've reduced its weighty feeling with a dual headband construction that distributes the weight evenly over the head. Frequency response is 20 to 20000 Hz.

If your tastes veer towards the louder, heavy-bass variety of popular music, the HP 880 headphones are purpose-built. The HP 880 set offers high performance at a truly comfortable price.

The list goes on. The HP 550's pressure-type construction makes it ideal for monitoring recording sessions. The HP 303 is an air tight stereo set and features large diameter driver unit (46 mm) with ingenious polyester diaphragm. Why not try them on for size?

Pick up the Works

Whether you want to record a flugelhorn, a fly on the wall or your father-in-law, JVC have the best mike around. For musical instruments the M 201 and MU 104 electret condenser mikes more than do the job (the former is stereo).

We recommend the MD 825 and MD 111 dynamic mikes for vocals, parties, speeches, meetings and interviews.

You'll find full information on directivity, frequency response, impedance and sensitivity in our

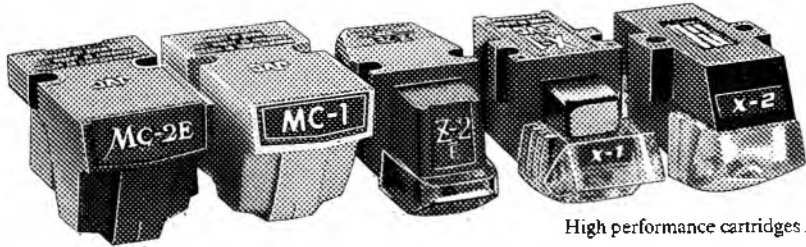


guide to g aids.

useful microphone guide. It's worth picking up too.

Moving on from the Moving Coil

These days every music lover knows the advantages of the MC (Moving Coil) cartridges, especially their indepen-



High performance cartridges from JVC

dependence of loading conditions. Now, using our advanced technology, JVC have developed a new design that far out performs conventional MC Cartridge designs.

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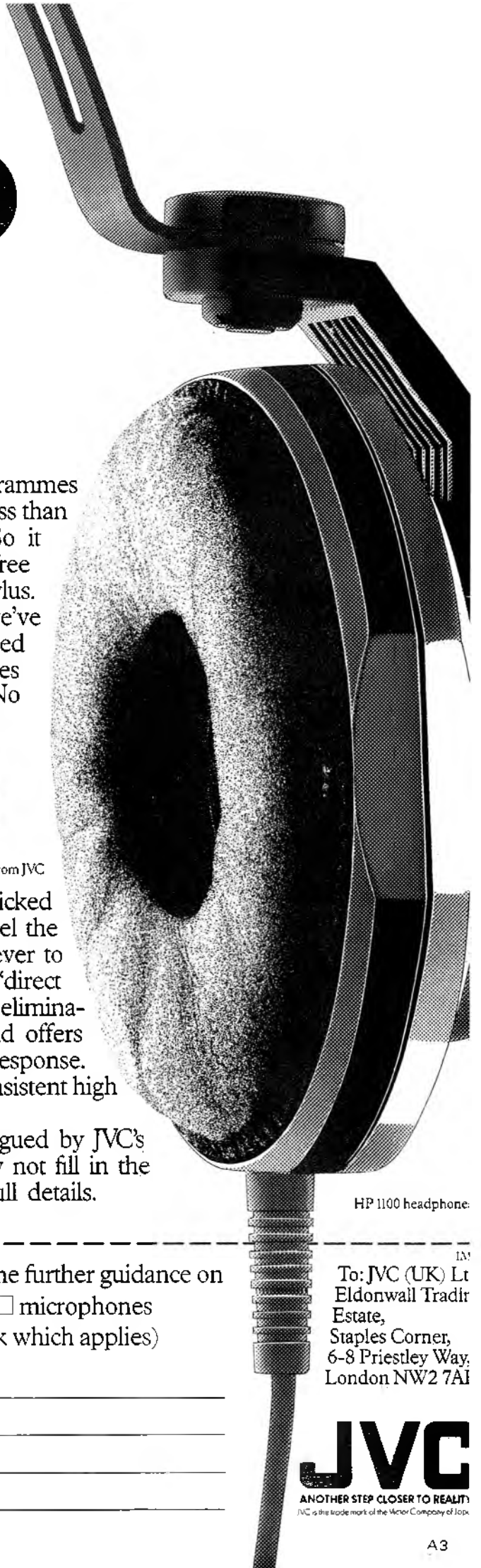
more must a signal picked up by the stylus travel the length of the Cantilever to reach the coil. JVC's 'direct coupling' design has eliminated phase delays and offers excellent transient response.

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If you are intrigued by JVC's accessory range why not fill in the coupon below for full details.



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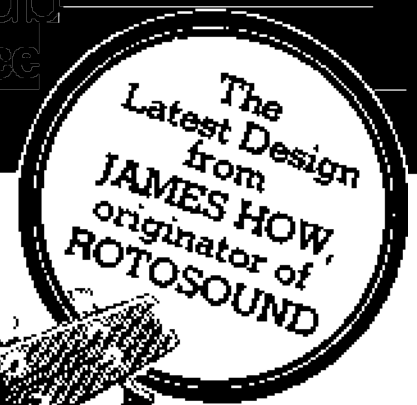
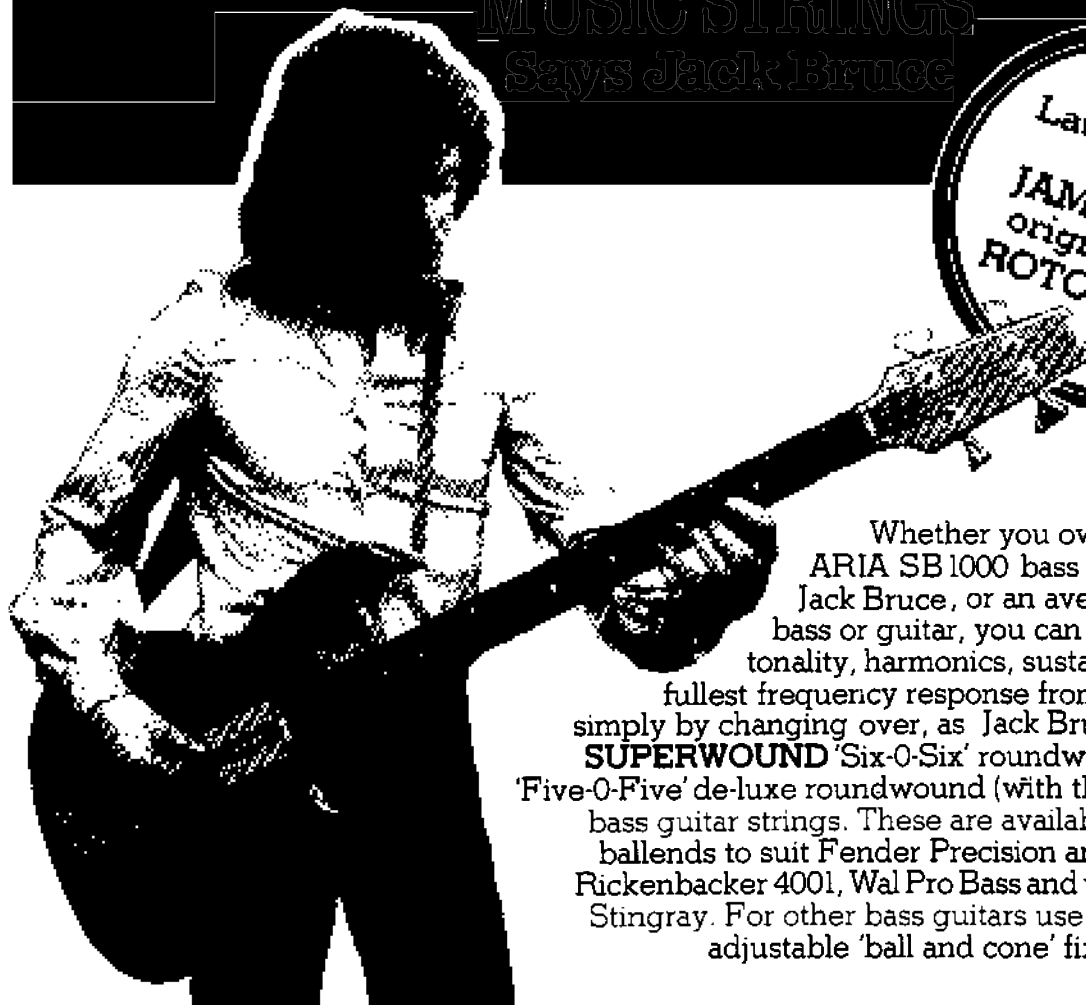
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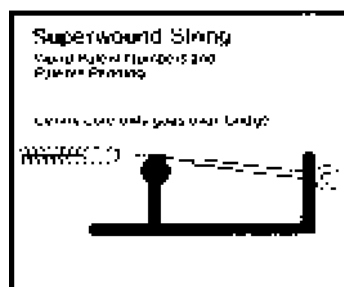
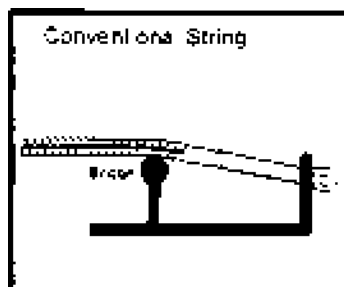
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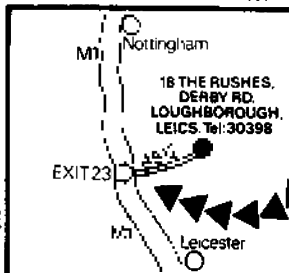
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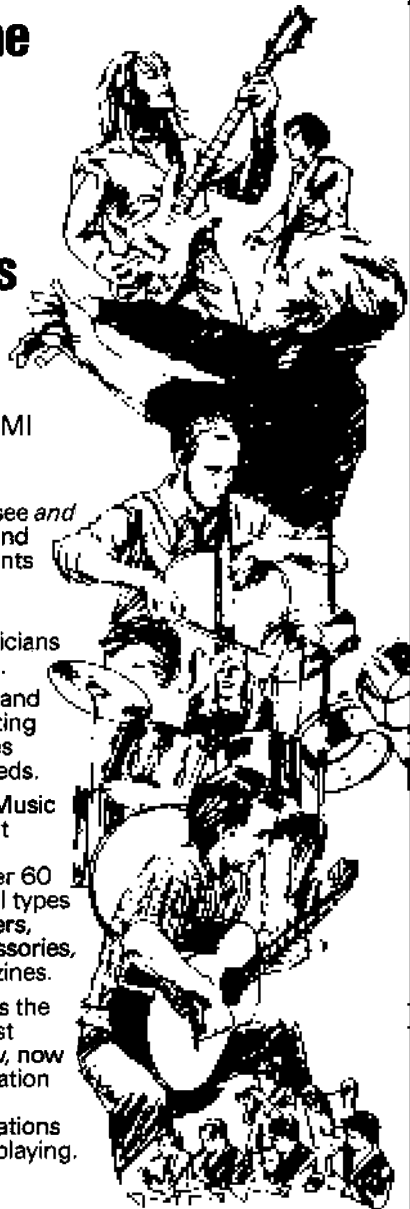
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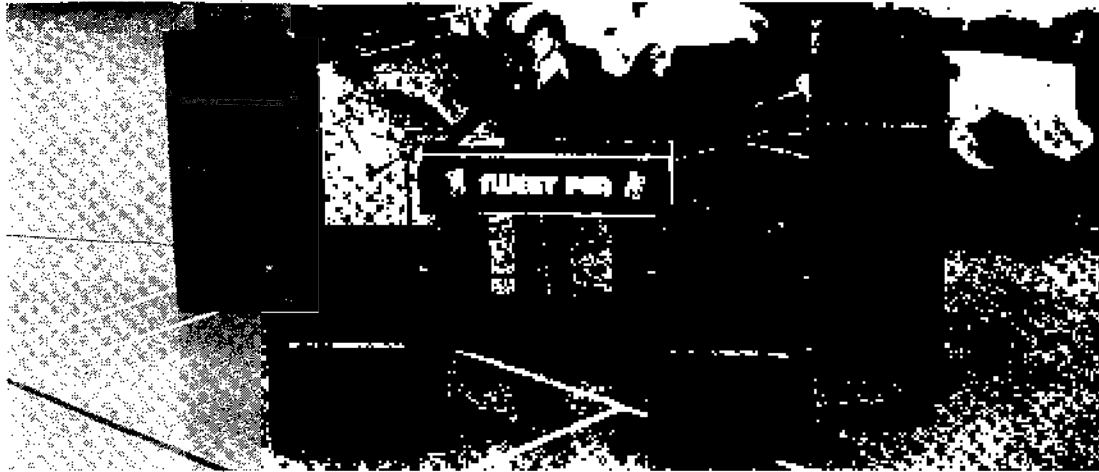


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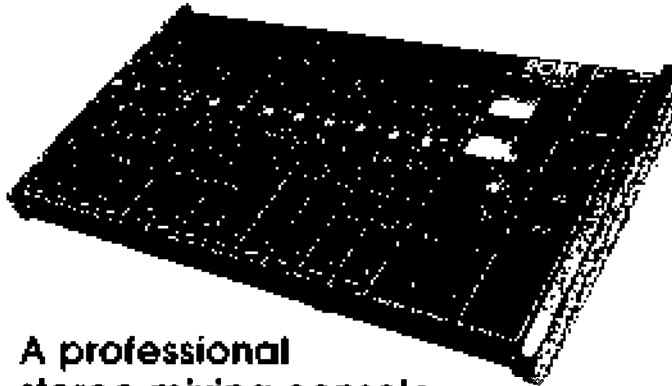
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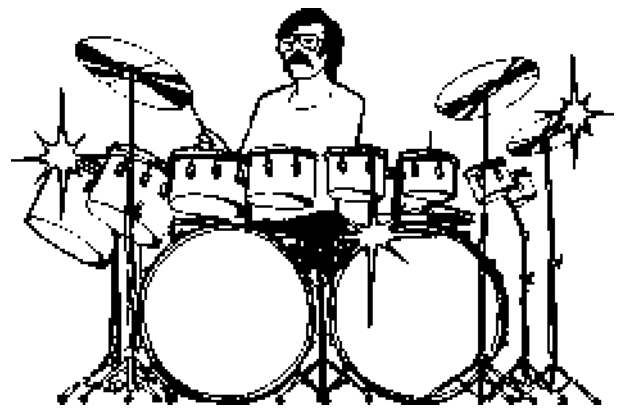
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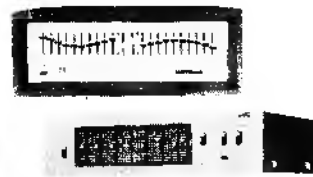
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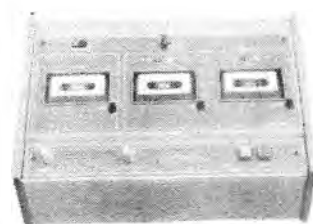
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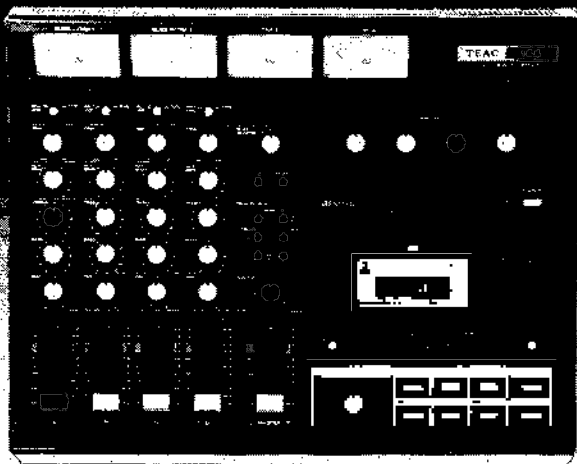
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The full-logic cue system in Porta-Studio lets you hear everything you're

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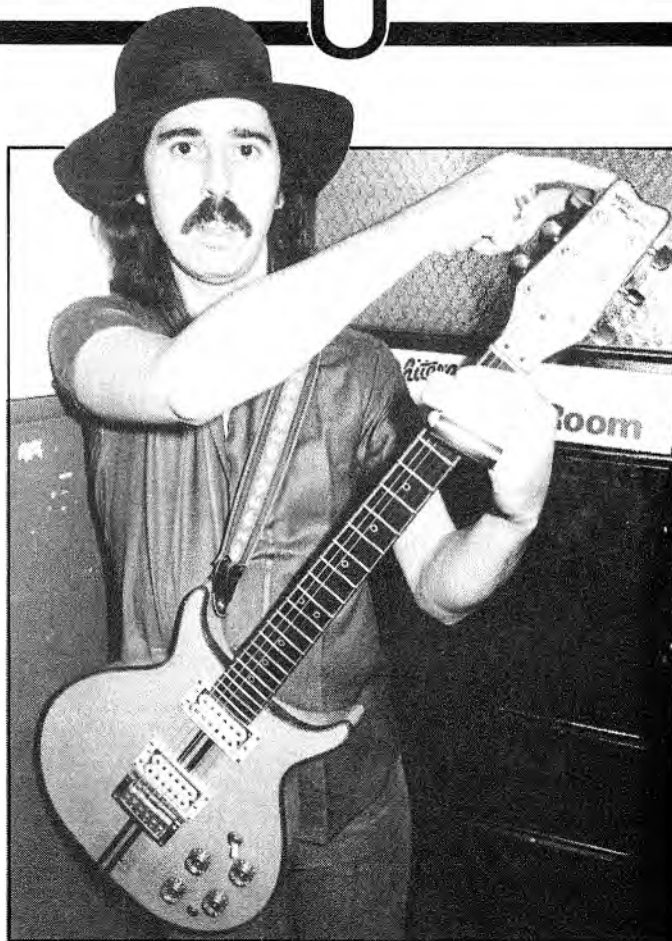
A New Division Is Born

Brodr. Jorgensen (UK) Ltd. has formed a new division: BJ Frets. BJ Frets is responsible for marketing the high quality guitars made by Washburn and Kramer and its formation is unquestionably a major event on the British music scene. Both these names have a background of success in the demanding American market and the guitars that bear them represent a degree of craftsmanship and instrument technology that is unusual even by today's standards.

Brodr. Jorgensen is an established name in the music industry, and BJ Frets will maintain the integrity and service back-up that has made the reputation of the parent company. In addition, it will be staffed exclusively by men who speak the language of guitarists. Dave Green, the Sales Manager, has had wide and varied experience in building guitars, collecting and restoring early American guitars, playing guitar professionally, and working with other musicians as a recording engineer and producer. He

has surrounded himself with like-minded people and comments: 'The products are exactly right, and we have got the sales and service to match them. We're offering instruments of quality and personality backed by imaginative American designers and extensive research. Everyone at BJ Frets has a solid grounding in fretted instrument technology. Also, we are all guitar players.'

Already reaction to the new division from musicians and retailers has been enthusiastic. Retailers welcome the dramatic increase in sales represented by the popular Kramer and Washburn lines. Musicians welcome a company committed to intelligent assessment of their needs and continual liaison. Leading guitarists are working continuously with Frets management on product development. Moreover, dealers and players alike appreciate a distributor who attaches as much importance to quality control and 'setting up' as this one does. A separate section of the Brentford premises is devoted to these aspects of the company under the direction of Mike Baron. Each guitar is inspected and adjusted to the extent that it is 'almost customized', in Mike's words, by the time it



Micky Moody - Whitesnake

leaves the warehouse.

BJ Frets is approaching its task as a young, enthusiastic division with justifiably expansive plans for the future, but managerial policy is at the same time centred very much on the individual guitar and the individual customer. Dave Green's attitude is summed up by the following statement:

'If every musician who buys a Washburn or a Kramer recognises the care and attention to detail that has gone into his instrument both in construction and at the setting up stage and feels we've given him an excellent deal in terms of

price, then we'll consider we're doing well.'

It is of interest to note that Washburn, for example, is one of the few guitars produced in Japan by its own exclusive factory, rather than by a factory sub-contracted for the purpose. The standards that operate at the factory of origin are matched by the standards at BJ Frets itself. The new division can handle a demand that is large and continually growing, and still give individual attention. They are proud to be associated with bringing to Britain what can only be called today's great guitars.



Mick Box - Uriah Heep

The Washburn Performers

Micky Moody (Whitesnake) Mick Box (Uriah Heep) Stan Webb (Stan Webb's Chicken Shack) Terry Britten (Cliff Richard Band/B A Robertson) Nancy Wilson (Heart) Randy Hansen (Randy Hansen Band) John Sloman (Uriah Heep)

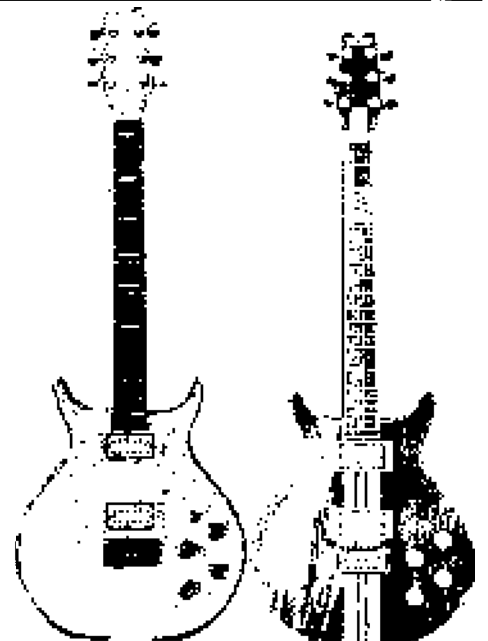
The Washburn Wings — A tradition takes flight

The Wing series of electric guitars were the Washburn idea of what an electric guitar ought to be, founded on more than 100 years of instrument-making experience.

They all have individual names, which accounts in part for their success because people tend to identify with names much better than just letters or numbers. You only have to look at the guitars that have been major sellers over the past fifteen years — Les Pauls, Stratocasters, etc. to see that a common link is that they all have an identity.

Opting for a well-tried body shape and conventional overall ap-

pearance, the designers of the Wing series went straight for essentials. The standard of construction had to be second to none with a degree of precision that had seldom previously been seen in instrument wood-working. Timbers and materials were selected to optimize playing characteristics and sustain, and different models were produced so that the needs of all musicians could be catered for. Finally, sound conscious as only makers of top quality acoustic instruments can be, Washburn insisted on the very finest of purpose-built electrics and electronics.



The Eagle

The Falcon

The Raven
Solid Mahogany Body
1-piece Mahogany Bolt-on neck
Rosewood Fingerboard
Strings attached through back of body
Brass saddles
Wine red, black, or tobacco sunburst finish
The Scavenger
Bass version of Raven with single P-bass type pickup.
The Falcon
Solid Ash body, carved rosewood or maple arch-top
5-piece rock maple and rosewood neck
Neck-through-body construction
Bound ebony fingerboard with polished jumbo frets

Brass bridge and nut
Strings attached through back of body
Washburn 'Power Sustain' humbuckers
Coil disconnect switches built into volume controls
Rosewood/maple, antique sunburst, cherry sunburst gold top finishes
The Hawk
Solid ash body with carved arch-top
3-piece rock maple and rosewood neck
Neck-through-body construction
Polished rosewood fingerboard with jumbo frets
Brass bridge and nut
Strings attached through back of body
Washburn 'Power Sustain' humbuckers

Wine red, grained brown, or tobacco sunburst finishes

The Eagle
Limited edition custom version of the Falcon with top quality wood, gold plated hardware, Mother-of-Pearl wing-shaped fingerboard inlays, or brass ringlets. Finishes: Black with Abalone trim, White with Abalone trim, natural flame maple top or cherry sunburst on flame maple top. Body and fingerboard bound in brass.

All models available in left-hand

The Stage Series — Performance guitars

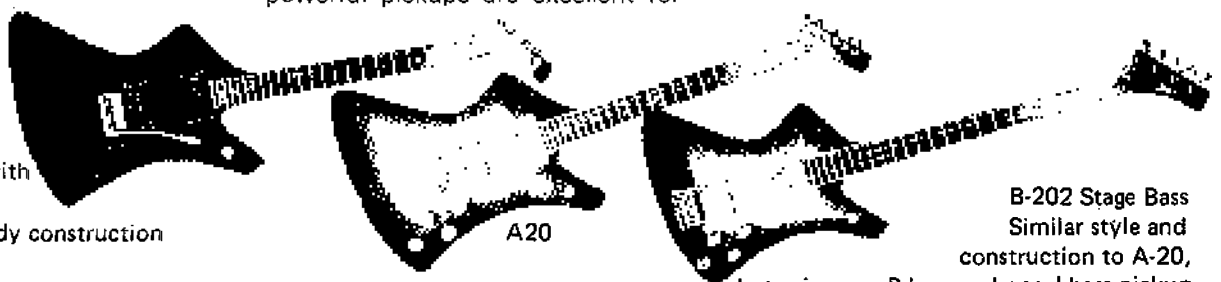
The Washburn stage series reflects the drama, the panache, and the electricity of modern music. Don't bother with them if your act tends to be pedestrian — these Washburns are design-

ed for the fast-playing, hard-hitting rock'n'roll guitarist who wants his instrument to have a bit of style without compromising its sound potential and playability. The powerful pickups are excellent for

distortion playing and, 'dirty' or clean, a Stage guitar gives the versatility you need. Remember — these guitars are made to be seen in fast company!

A-20 Stage Guitar

- *2-piece book-matched flame maple top
- *All-black finish with brass binding
- *Neck-through-body construction
- *Split-coil sound
- *Version available with 'Strat-type' vibrato.

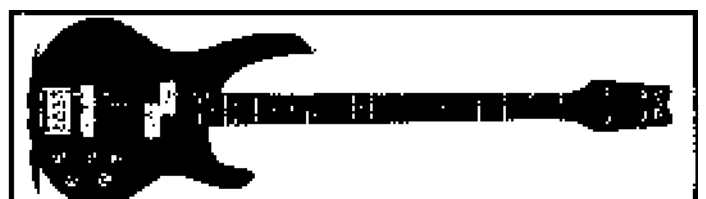


A20

B-202 Stage Bass
Similar style and construction to A-20, but using one P-bass and one J-bass pickup.

STOP PRESS TWO NEW BASSES FROM WASHBURN WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE AUTUMN.

STAY TUNED!



A hundred years of Washburn



When George Washburn Lyon began making musical instruments in Chicago just over a century ago, mass production hadn't been invented. The only way for a luthier to make a guitar was for him to sit down and create every piece of the instrument himself.

Times certainly have changed, but the way a Washburn is constructed has not. Every product adheres to the same basic princi-

ple which George Washburn initiated in 1876...*hand-made quality*. This principle resulted in "first place" awards at Music Expositions held throughout the world. Today, the challenge for the Washburn company is to maintain a high quality, hand-crafted instrument in the face of increasing pressure for mass production needed to meet the ever-growing demand.

This challenge was accepted by an enterprising guitar maker, Rudy Schlacher, and a professional musician, Rick Johnstone. Realizing the need for quality, reasonably priced guitars, banjos and mandolins, the partners took over and expanded the Washburn Company.

The new Washburns have

been completely redesigned to meet the exacting demands of today's musicians. Over the last twenty years Japan has become the home of fine craftsmanship for many products, including musical instruments. All the Washburn designs are now translated by Japan's most experienced craftsmen, thus assuring the consistent quality and workmanship for which they are known.

The complete Washburn line provides over sixty models designed for amateur as well as professional musicians. From classic to electric, from banjo to mandolin, each instrument offers the same tradition and quality which has made Washburn world-famous.

Whichever Washburn model you purchase, you're buying more than one hundred years of instrument-making history.

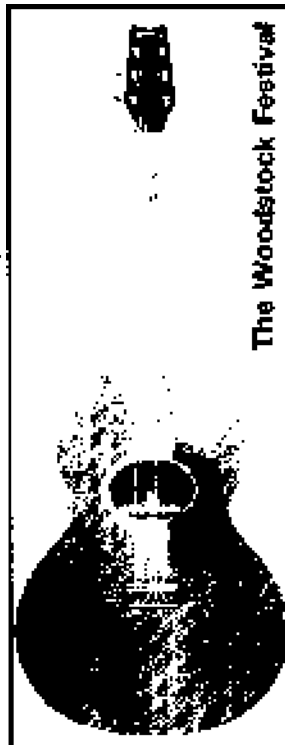
'Festivals' Come To Town

Acoustic Electric guitar players take note. The new Washburn Festival series guitars are rather unique, because they are designed to perform equally well without bias towards either the acoustic or the electric mode. Needless to say, whether you're plugged in or playing acoustically the sound is what you would expect from a Washburn, since the guitars are carefully crafted in selected timbers and have a revolutionary high output pickup system which minimizes string noise and feedback problems without the need for a pre-amp.

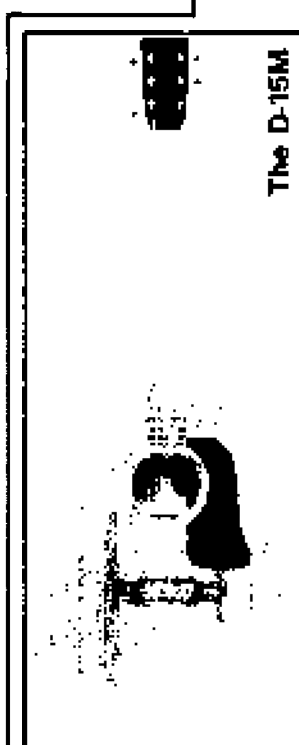
There are three models of the Festival: the **EA-40 Woodstock** (6 or 12-string), a shallow-bodied all-mahogany guitar with Tobacco Sunburst or Wine Red finishes, the **EA-44 Monterey** (6 or 12-string) with shallow body, solid spruce top in Natural or Tobacco Sunburst finish, laminated rosewood back and sides and the **EA-45 Tanglewood** (6 or 12-string) with deep body, solid spruce top in Natural or Tobacco Sunburst finish, laminated rosewood back and sides.

The range offers varying degrees of volume, bass, and projection according to which model you choose, and the trade marks of these guitars include conveniently placed volume and EQ pots, compensated saddle, characteristic oval sound hole plus full length arched back and Florentine cut-away.

The Festivals are competitively priced and will make a considerable impression in the UK. At the moment some musicians may have to wait before acquiring one. The first consignment, due for import in August, will be strictly limited. BJ Frets apologise in advance for any disappointment, and intend to make it up with future monthly consignments.



The Woodstock Festival



The D-15M

Washburn Acoustics

— They Still Lead

Originally made in Chicago, the name 'George Washburn' has been recognised as a tradition in quality stringed instruments since 1876. Hand-crafting and meticulous workmanship have long made Washburn one of the benchmarks by which fine fretted instruments are measured.

Today, the Washburn Dreadnoughts, Flat Tops and Grand Concert guitars are still made to standards of which the original George Washburn, with his traditional tools and painstaking techniques, would have approved. The designs have changed to suit the demands of today's guitarists, and the volume of business has changed with output measured in hundreds of guitars rather than 'one-offs'. But the standards have not been altered, except where modern techniques could improve a particular feature. The materials, also, are selected with as much care as George Washburn himself would have exercised, with unusually widespread use of solid wood. An important aspect of a good acoustic guitar is that it matures and improves with age, and it is a matter of pride with the company that instruments currently being made will be as structurally sound and musically sensitive in fifty years, as their counterparts made fifty years ago are now.

The acoustic guitar series includes the D-15, D-15M, D-25, and D-25 12-string Dreadnoughts, and the small-bodied F-15 folk-shaped guitar. There is also the Washburn Solid Wood range with names like the Timber Ridge Custom and the Prairie Song Custom evoking what these guitars are about: they are personalized instruments intended to become very much a part of your music.

Kramer

The most popular guitars of the '60s and '70s were designed, except for a few variations, in the '50s. But the signs are that many musicians of the coming decade are going to favour an '80s guitar, in every sense. A guitar for an age of high technology and fine-tolerance specifications. A guitar for music demanding precision and power in lead and rhythm work. In short, a Kramer.

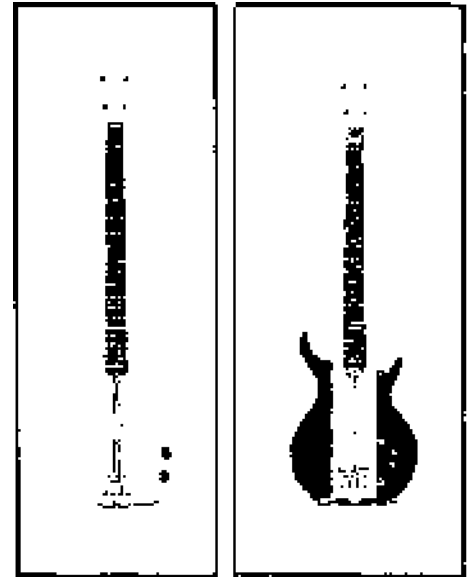
The story of Kramer began just four years ago when Dennis Berardi, a New York musical instrument retailer who had made a first-hand study of what guitarists wanted from their instruments, decided, literally, to take the concept of the electric guitar back to the drawing board.

The massive success of the Kramer guitar line revolves around the patented forged aluminium 'T' neck with wood inlays. The design creates a neck that cannot warp but still has the warm, comfortable feel of wood.

The Kramer guitar was presented to the world as an entirely new concept, and to judge by its reception, the world had been waiting for it.

After the prototypes had generated such interest, the new instrument was brought into large-scale production by Peter LaPlaca, who joined the Kramer company from Norlin music. Peter saw the product as a challenge to take a guitar with a specification that would normally have confined it to just a few very rich and very discerning professionals, and produce and market it at a price that would put it within reach of any serious guitarist. From the start, this object was achieved and from the first production

models to the DMZ Custom models that are currently so popular, Kramer have demonstrated that perfection is accessible.



DMZ-4001 Bass DMZ-6000 Bass

The DMZ 6000G/B

DMZ Custom Limited
Production Series

The DMZ 6000G guitar and 6000B bass are precision built Kramers with DBL TM Electronics... not just a treble, bass, or power booster but a true active system designed with the musician in mind. Features:

- Volume and tone controls are totally independent and non-interactive
- With volume at max. the guitars' output is double that of a non-preamped guitar
- The tone control actually provides control of treble gain as well as attenuation

- Low impedance output gives ability to drive long lines without worry of hum or radio interference pickup
- Guitar output can directly drive high impedance headphones for private practice or tune-up
- Effects devices work more efficiently because they receive a larger signal
- Original "sound" of guitar is not lost. By setting all controls at "5" the preamp has no noticeable affect on the sound
- State-of-the-art circuitry provides long battery life (estimated 350-400 playing hours)

The DMZ 4001

'the first bass with real precision' features:

- 'Dead spot' eliminating design
- Aluminium neck — cannot warp
- Stepped body joint for access to top frets
- High Performance DiMarzio P-bass pickup — punch, power, and clarity with low noise
- BADASS bridge gives ultimate action and intonation control
- Schaller M4 machine heads
- Custom tooled hardware
- Series parallel switch for tone variety
- Contoured body

Neil Murray (Whitesnake) Trevor Bolder (Uriah Heep) Dave Markee (Eric Clapton Band) Michael Rutherford (Genesis)
Pete Briquette (Boomtown Rats) Alan Lancaster (Status Quo) John Deacon (Queen) Patrick Olive (Hot Chocolate)
Erik Scott P.M.-(Carl Palmer's band)



Neil Murray (Whitesnake)



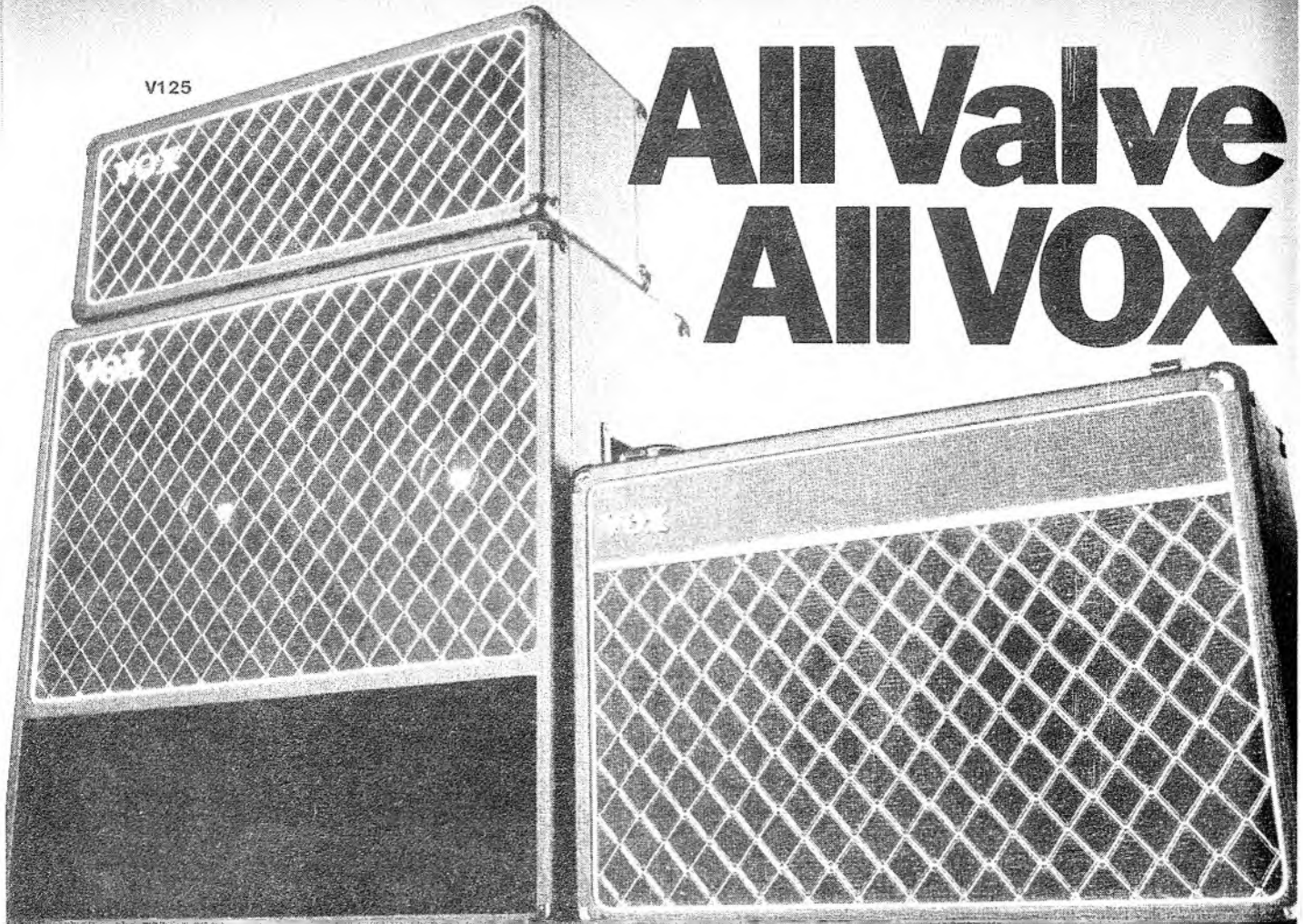
Trevor Bolder (Uriah Heep)

The Kramer Quotes (No. 1)

'All Kramer products have an evenness of response and a quality of tone that makes them ideal for studio use. In particular the 4001 delivers a great sound for any style with the minimum of studio "doctoring". This means less time and less money spent. Kramer are my first choice any time' — Pip Williams, top record producer of such varied sounds as Status Quo and the Moody Blues.

V125

All Valve All VOX



VR212

V15

The all new Vox V15 Combo is the product of Vox experience and the needs of the 1980 musician. It's all valve, of course, for that unique warm overload sound. The twin speaker design is unusual in a 15 Watt Combo, but essential to fully express the potential of the amplifier design.

It's size is only 63 X 46 X 22 X cms but well balanced for portability, and weighing in at around 14 kilos it won't need much carrying! However nothing is sacrificed in construction and quality — the V15 remains true to the Vox tradition!

The all valve design features a classic Vox 'push pull' output stage using EL84 valves, and draws on years of AC30 experience. It will easily exceed 15 Watts RMS, bettering 20 Watts Peak Power. The preamp is all valve too, with preamp volume control, master volume control, and three band passive equalisation — bass, middle and treble.

Tremendous care and patience went into this design. Top rock musicians played prototypes and gave their suggestions — the result a combo for you, the 1980 Vox enthusiast.

New for 1980 is the Vox V125 Lead Stack. It's powerful, versatile, portable and Vox. The styling draws on the classical Vox tradition. But 1980 innovations in the design bring to the musician such features as active equalisation in a valve design.

The Vox V125 is a true concert amp being powerful enough for the loudest of bands. It will easily produce 125 Watts RMS before distortion, and will run 180 Watts Peak, and that's not flat out!

But not every gig needs enormous volume potential. So the Vox V125 includes a master volume control to limit that powerful output stage to the level that suits you. You can still overload at any volume by using the preamp volume control to wind up the valve front end.

The preamp has another original control — sensitivity. The difference between a cheap pickup and a Di-Marzio X2N is enormous. This new sensitivity control allows you to custom tailor the amps sensitivity to your guitars output — any guitar can drive the Vox V125.

The tone circuit is pure Vox magic. Five bands of active equalisation — the sort only previously found in the best recording studios. With these tone controls you can boost certain tones and cut them — conventional amps only cut. The benefit is incredible tone versatility. You must hear it.

One of the problems of creating an amplifier with such an exceptional performance is to find a cabinet that can do it justice and Vox abandoned traditional 4 X 12 designs as being inadequate for the V125.

The folded bin design of the VR212 provides the full frequency response the V125 needs. Two 12 inch Vox drivers, each rated at 80 Watts, deliver both direct radiated middle and treble, and bass frequencies enhanced by the ported construction. Further advantages are the compact dimensions and light weight when compared with conventional 4 X 12's.

Check out the new Vox V125 Stack and the V15 Combo. We know you'll like them.

VOX

VOX Limited 32-34 Gordon House Road London NW5 1NE
Telephone: 01-267 0702

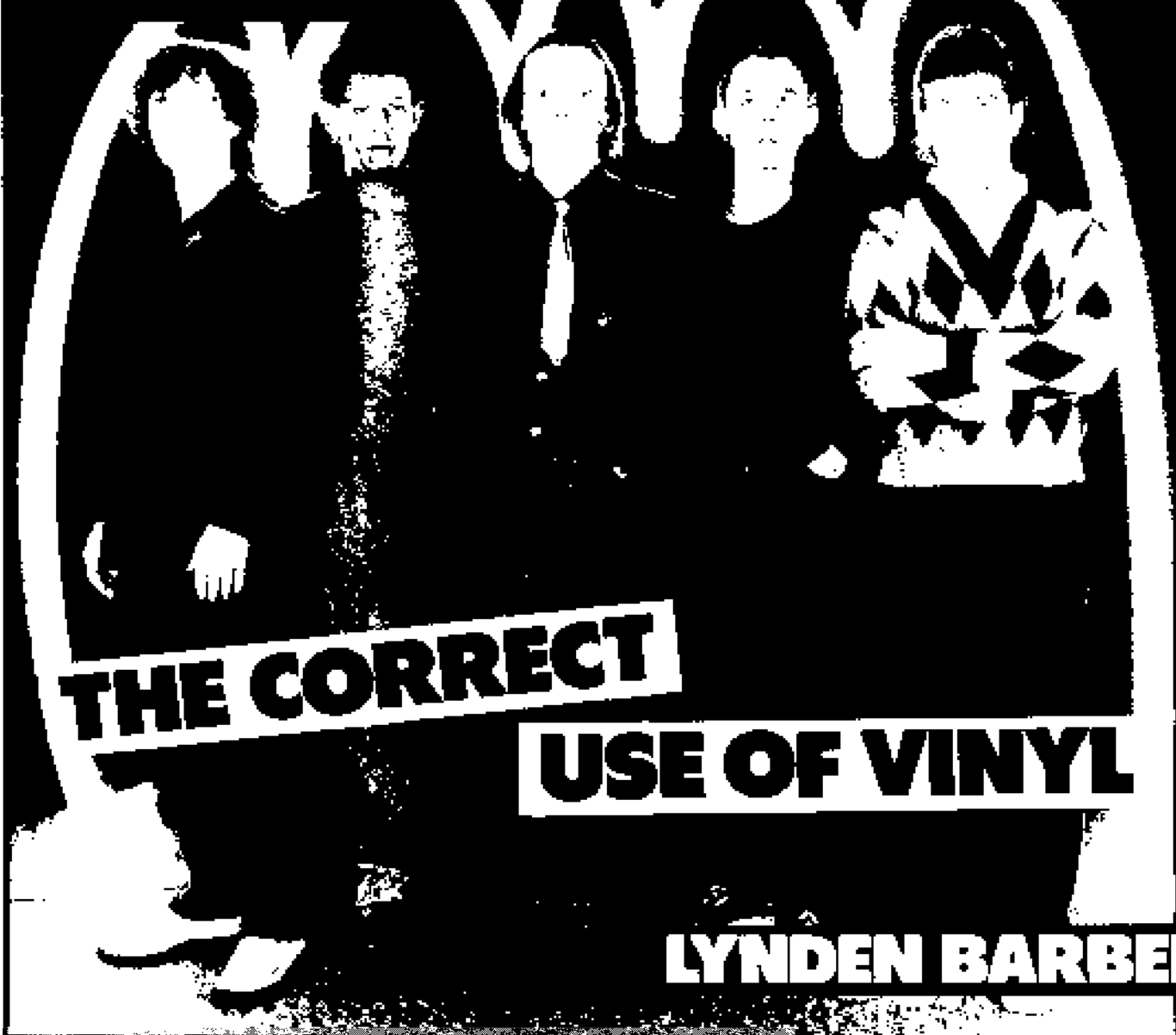
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MAGAZINE



THE CORRECT

USE OF VINYL

LYNDEN BARBER

Bored with the flotsam of the punk movement, still whining about what a hard life they've got while churning out a motley selection from the Steve Jones' Book of Rejected Guitar Riffs on £600 Gibson Les Pauls through £400 Marshall stacks?

So is John McGeoch. He was getting tired of it as early as 1977. That's why he helped form a new band with Howard Devoto, ex-singer with Manchester's favourite punk group the Buzzcocks. The band was Magazine, and they were different.

They had intelligence, subtlety and imagination as well as the usual ingredients of energy and aggression. And their keyboard player Dave Formula actually dared to use a synthesizer, that most unfashionable of instruments in the anybody-can-pick-up-a-Woolies-guitar-and-play days of '77.

"We certainly welcomed Dave bringing in stuff like that because it gave us much more of a vocabulary," said McGeoch. "There wasn't a master plan, but we were reacting against headbanging because everybody was doing it.

The Buzzcocks and the Pistols and a few other bands were the original ones to play like that, and then suddenly every town had about 20 bands all sounding exactly the same. While we were involved in the energy side of things, we didn't just want to sound like the Clash."

John first met Devoto at a punk party in Manchester in early '77. "Punk rock was very young then, and although in London it was about six months older, in Manchester it was still quite a small scene. The only reason I met Howard was because it was a punk party, which was like the 30 punks in Manchester. I was fortunate enough to be one of them." Howard had recently left the Buzzcocks, and a couple of weeks later rang John and "summoned" him. Those first bedroom sessions produced two songs that were to become Magazine classics — "The Light Pours Out of Me", and "Shot By Both Sides".

"The original plan was just to put out a single," explained McGeoch. "But it went so well that we decided to make a go of it and advertised in the local record shop for musicians." Bass player Barry

Adamson and drummer Martin Jackson answered the ad, and the group was born (Jackson was to leave through musical dissatisfaction about a year later, to be replaced by John Doyle). There was a keyboard player in the lineup, but things didn't work out, and four months later Dave Formula joined the band.

Said Dave: "I just happened to go down and see about the second gig they did in a Manchester club and fell for the band straight away and thought 'that's the band for me.'" Formula was sharing a flat with Martin Hannett, who had produced the Buzzcocks' "Spiral Scratch" EP, and Devoto rang Hannett to ask if he knew any keyboard players. "I'd already said to Martin how much I liked the band and of course it just worked out like a dream."

The first indication that something was astir was the band's debut single, "Shot By Both Sides", produced by Mick Glossop and the band. Based around a spiralling guitar riff, it sounded, like all great singles, as if it was a long forgotten tune from the distant

past that you couldn't quite put your finger on. But the definitive version of the song was yet to come — it was later re-recorded with producer John Leckie for *Real Life*, their debut album.

The follow up single, "Touch and Go", was a let down, saved only by a bizarre version of John Barry's "Goldfinger" on the 'B' side (John Barry is a bit of a cult figure to the band — they open their stage set with a tape of music from a shampoo ad composed by him). It wasn't until *Real Life* was released that the public could see just how far Magazine had developed. A remarkably mature first album, it took its place alongside other classics such as Television's *Marquee Moon* and the Banshees' *The Scream* as one of the finest albums of the late Seventies. It showed more than anything that bands could move away from the basic EAB chord formulas without losing any of the commitment that originally fired punk. There was pessimism and paranoia soaked into the music, a haunting minor chord atmosphere throughout, heightened by Devoto's impressionistic lyrics. "It's so hot in here. What are they trying to hatch?" he asked on the final track, "Parade", as Formula's synthesizer snaked around a mysterious backdrop.

Dave was still living in the same flat as producer Martin Hannett when he wrote "Parade". "We had a little music room at the back of the flat with lots of gadgets, rhythm boxes, echo units, all sorts of things," explained Formula. "I was messing about with the drum machine and my synthesizer and echo, and the main melody for the intro just came out while we were mucking about. And the actual melody for the song got developed there as well. I was really excited by it, I recorded it and drove round to Howard's place and brought him back and said 'what do you think of this?' I don't know where it came from because it was so different from what we were doing. Howard was very interested, he was right into it. Barry (Adamson) came in on it and helped after the initial idea was there. The pair of us just got the whole song, melody, everything, in about half an afternoon. We were really pleased with it."

The album was recorded at Ridge Farm in Surrey, before it was converted into a recording studio, using the Virgin mobile. Said John, "At the time it was just a soundproofed barn with residential facilities. John Leckie was good for us to do the first album with because he was a bit of a teacher."

Magazine went up to Good Earth studios to record their second album, *Secondhand Daylight*, with producer Colin Thurston. It was a different sound for the band — down went the guitar in the mix, up went the sophistication — and one that was to lead to a flood of critics' put downs... what Formula calls "the Emperor's new clothes", one leads and the rest follow for fear of seeming unhip.

The new sound wasn't one that was foisted onto the band by the producer, however. McGeoch explained: "We didn't actually want to have heavy sound-

ing guitars all the way through. It was partly due to me that the guitar was down. We really did stretch the studio, we did use lots of effects."

It was probably the opening track on side two, "The Thin Air", which did the most to provoke criticism. It was a slow, atmospheric piece based around synthesizer, similar in mood to some of the music in the Australian film "Picnic at Hanging Rock", although McGeoch, who wrote the piece, has never seen the film. As he observed, "it's a long way from 'Anarchy In The The UK'."

"It was just very unfashionable. Fashion is not the bother, but the reviews bothered us, obviously, especially when it's about something which you feel quite strongly. Just because there's keyboards on something doesn't mean to say it's not hip."

I mentioned to John that I was surprised when I looked at the album's credits and saw that he had written "The Thin Air", which I had naturally assumed had been composed by Dave on his keyboard set-up. "It's just that in Manchester we had a rehearsal studio all to ourselves in a guy's cellar," he explained. "We used to leave all our equipment set up so any time anyone wanted to go in they'd just go down there. One day Barry was with me and we went down there and recorded it. I wrote it on a guitar, and all Dave's keyboards were there, we just messed around and layered it up a bit."

If there was anything disappointing about the album it was not so much to do with the production as some uninspired material, particularly on the first side. Turning the record over was a different matter however. The second side contained two of the band's most inspired cuts to date — the evil sounding "Permafrost", and a piece which veered between haziness and violence, "Back To Nature".

The band had just returned from a tour supporting Patti Smith in Germany

and Belgium when Formula wrote the music for the song, which he reckoned accounted for "a certain Germanic influence". Devoto's lyrics, far from showing a desire to "get back to the land" as the title implies, expressed the opposite. "Howard went on a holiday with our manager for a week's trout fishing in the north of Scotland and he just found himself completely bored by it," said McGeoch. "It was a dreadful week because he was just a town dweller. In the song he was just saying 'what's all the fuss about?'"

The band toured to promote *Secondhand Daylight* and then, as far as British fans were concerned, they disappeared. No records... no concerts... no interviews. It was as if the world had gone into an alternative universe in which a rock band called Magazine just didn't figure. The truth was a bit more mundane — they were busy touring in Europe and the States. They were well received in Belgium and France, where they had already done some ground-work, but in America their music was only known in some of the big cities.

"We were playing small clubs, people would come to see us because we were an English band without knowing our music. But we were getting applause, which made us happy, of course," said McGeoch.

Some of the American kids were so keen to get away from their normal FM diet of Styx and Foreigner that they went right over the top... like pogoing to the plodding tempo of 'Permafrost', for example! And then there was the 'First Church of Howard' in Cleveland, Ohio, run by "this really loopy girl called Mom." Howard and John visited the girl's flat to find it had been made into a virtual shrine to Magazine. "There was her and about three of her followers," said John. "A girl came up to me and went like this"... McGeoch slowly reached out and touched my sleeve in mock wonder. "I must say that it wasn't 100 per cent serious. They were just like real fans with a fan club called the First Church of Howard."

The year's silence in Britain ended dramatically in the spring of this year. Three new singles were released within a month of each other — "A Song From Under The Floorboards", a version of Sly Stone's "Thank You (Falettin Me Be Mice Elf Agin)" and "Upside Down" — coupled with a new album, *The Correct Use of Soap*, and a national tour. The American experience seems to have fuelled their creative urge and forced them to think about what direction they are going in.

The new album is by far their roughest, most forceful recording to date, with McGeoch's guitar dominant in the mix. It's definitely a "back to the roots" move, with strong black influences in evidence in places — their choice of a Sly Stone song, for example, and McGeoch's funky guitar riffs on tracks like "Stuck" and "Philadelphia" (he names James Brown as an influence, and Dave Formula and Barry Adamson have also listened to funk). A change of mood is also in evidence, ▶



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away from the gloom and despair of previous recordings towards a new optimism ("I want to burn again" sings Devoto, looking forward to a new love affair).

The raw sound is a result of the band wanting to capture the power of their stage performance on vinyl, and much of the credit must go to producer Martin Hannett. Formula and Adamson had originally wanted to use him on *Second-hand Daylight*, not just because he was an old mate but also because they had been impressed by his work with Joy Division.

Dave explained: "By this time he was using techniques that most producers in England weren't using. In other words, they were very confident in their own styles and just applied their styles to whatever band they worked with. Whereas Martin was improvising quite a lot in the studio using delay lines and all that, he would never go into a studio without taking an armada of his own equipment. Whatever cost the most, Martin would have it. Before he started to work, the engineer would just think he was a nutcase." McGeoch added: "It was very useful because we recorded most of the third album on a mobile at our rehearsal studio. The mobile is pretty underequipped, it's just got a desk, so Martin brought in his gear, which was good."

Hannett has also stamped his personal approach all over the singles. For example, on stage "Thank You" is filled out with slabs of funky cheap-toned organ but on record Hannett has opted for a more sparse sound. The 'B' sides are interesting too (bar the appallingly pretentious "The Book" on the back of "Thank You") — a new version of "The Light Pours Out of Me" with drumming that sounds like it was recorded on the assembly line at Longbridge, and "Twenty Years Ago", a chugging excursion into PIL territory based on a "jam" between Barry Adamson and John Doyle.

The short gap between the release of the three singles seemed commercial suicide, but the band didn't plan them so much as hit singles as a way of announcing their return.

"I'm sure if we had stuck with 'Floorboards' we could have at least got into the top 50, because it was just starting to pick up radio play," said Formula. "Of course, as soon as the next one came it dropped back. The reason why they appeared like that was because we had not played in the country for 12 months. To all intents and purposes we had just gone and there were all 'Magazine have just broken up' stories."

Dave Formula's musical career began when he started playing blues harp and joined an R&B band shortly after leaving school. "Eventually they said 'have you ever thought about playing organ?' so they bought me this cheap little organ," he recalled. "The only other band I was involved with before Magazine was another Manchester band called Giro, which was like a pre-punk band. It was a hooligan-dole queue band. There was a lot of energy there, it wasn't formalised,

but it was a good, tight little band, I had two or three months of standing in for people, and then Magazine."

He wasn't really into English music — he listened mainly to German bands like Can and "some good disco" — but things changed when he heard the Sex Pistols for the first time. "I was in Chichester, which must be the most conservative place on the country, and I wanted to get back to Manchester very quickly to see what was happening."

Dave's keyboards set-up has expanded considerably since his early days with a cheap organ. Nowadays he uses a Yamaha YC 45D organ with modified Leslie speaker, Yamaha electric grand, Yamaha string machine, Roland electric piano-harpsichord with five-band graphic, ARP Odyssey, Roland mixer and various effects pedals. His amps are Yamaha.

John McGeoch's guitar playing is a kick in the face to those who still accuse New Wave musicians of not being able to play their instruments. His playing is imaginative and disciplined, which is rare enough in these days of endless "son of Eric Clapton rides again" guitar solos.

"When I was about 15 or 16 I used to listen to Hendrix and learnt his stuff. As a result of that I'm very conscious of not playing standard rock'n'roll licks, I don't allow myself to do that. But it's almost gone the other way, a humorous thing, I like sticking in rock'n'roll things just as a joke. I don't like blues-style guitar playing simply because everybody does it," he said. "I do work out solos, I don't indulge, I try and write them as melodies almost, not as exhibitions of how good I am at playing guitar. You can look at the guitar visually, a diminished run is a gap of four on the first string, then you move up a fret onto the second string, so you can invent things on the guitar just by drawing lines if you like. I've done that in the past, like on "Motorcade".

John has a very individual, almost wailing, guitar sound, which he achieves using a Yamaha SG1000, a Marshall 50 watt valve combo with master control and volume, and an MXR flanger. He chose the 50 watt Marshall so that he could "wind it up without having too much volume. I took the Marshall speakers out because they're a bit flimsy and put in ATCs, which are PA speakers with very heavy magnets". He likes the MXR flanger because it has a lot of different effects, and has it mounted on a microphone stand, with an extension footswitch on the floor, so he can adjust it between songs without having to grovel about the stage. For sustain he uses an MXR compressor, and his strings are Ernie Ball Super Slinky, gauges 009, 011, 015, 024, 032, 048.

His first ever guitar was "a Woolworth's job", which he used in the usual round of church hall gigs with his first band in Scotland when he was about 15, playing Led Zeppelin and Cream re-hashes. He moved down to London at the age of 16, and then went to study fine art at Manchester Polytechnic. He actually got his degree at the same time as he was playing with

Magazine. "It was quite hectic, because I'd done two tours, a Top of the Pops, an album, and I was in my third year writing my thesis." He bought the Yamaha with the advance the band got when they signed with Virgin, and still thinks that it's "great". Every six months he has the neck reset, since it tends to get chucked around and dropped on tour. One useful feature of the Yamaha is a torque for adjusting each machine head, which allows for fine tuning. He also owns a Les Paul, which he likes, "but it simply doesn't give as good as the Yamaha."

McGeoch also augments certain songs with saxophone, which he learnt when he was sharing a flat with a "mad sax player". John would probably admit he isn't exactly the world's most proficient saxophonist, but it hardly matters since he uses it to add tonal variety to an otherwise all-electric musical diet.

McGeoch was recently offered the chance of joining Siouxsie and the Banshees on a permanent basis after touring and recording with them — it was his ringing guitar work which dominated the band's hit single "Happy House". The Banshees had auditioned literally scores of guitarists, some of whom did not even know the band's material, and they eventually asked John to help them out. Deciding whether to stay with the Banshees or go back to Magazine was one of the most uncomfortable choices that he had ever made. He chose Magazine.

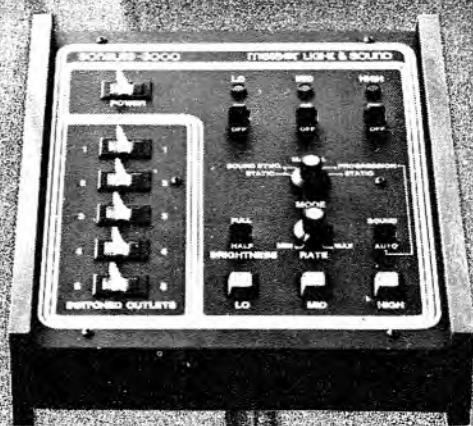
"If the Banshees get a guitarist they are happy with then I'll be happy, but I'd like to work with them again," he said. He had also been asked to play with some other people (he would not elaborate) but "you have to be careful not to just fart around."

John worked on five new songs with the Banshees. "Really I just put the guitar onto songs that they more or less had. Of course I put in my opinion on the arrangements, like any song with Magazine." John wrote the almost neo-classical guitar line on "Happy House" around a bass line and melody worked out by bass player Steve Severin. "It was picked, it was almost like a country pick. I don't use my fingers but I can pick quickly with a plectrum. The rest was just Em just slid right up." The Banshees unveiled some of the new material on their short tour in spring and it displayed a heavy Eastern influence, particularly the song "Desert Kisses".

"Because they haven't got a John McKay figure writing they're really expanding in different directions," said McGeoch. "Sue's started to play guitar, although I don't think she's going to be a fill-in for a guitarist, and Steve's got a synthesizer. I was quite surprised at how important a part Steve plays, not only in their sound but in their arrangements, 'Switch' and things like that. He's quite a quiet guy until you get to know him, but he's actually very intense in the musical thing."

McGeoch also supplied the guitar on "Christine", the Banshees' follow up to "Happy House". ■

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ROCKIN' DOPSIE KING OF ZYDECO

by Paul Ashford

If you had asked the average British musician his opinion of Zydeco music prior to the British 1979 Cambridge Folk Festival, you'd probably have got much the same response as if you asked the average member of the Red Army Choir what he thought of Punk Rock. In most circles, the style was completely unknown.

Now, after seven or eight months, Rockin' Dopsie, the man who took his 'Zydeco Crusade' to Europe, has enjoyed inordinately favorable publicity, excellent reviews, and sell-outs on just about every gig he's played. On the morning following a riotous London show — at which I forgot my critical detachment sufficiently to cavort about the floor crushing the feet of people to whom I hadn't even been introduced — I met the "Louisiana Legend" to talk about his unique blend of music.

The feeling was that of meeting one of the great bluesmen except that there's nothing of the "revival" in the impression Zydeco is making. Does the style have its roots in blues?

"Well, the Zydeco come from the French Cajun, that's where we took it from." Rockin' Dopsie explains. Like some of the other black American singers, his voice has the impression of having been intended for singing and only adapted for talking as an afterthought — in conversation gruff and growling ja, contrast to the power and clarity with which he delivers his songs. "The Zydeco came from the French Cajun. I think the French music came from Canada and before that from France, but when the French Cajuns came to the South, that's what they came with. But then the black people took it — we stole it from them you see, but also we 'ranged it. We 'ranged that music and we made the Zydeco, like I play. I play French music in combination with a little jazz, a little rock, a little blues, but the way I play it is *moving*. It really makes you move because you got that blues in it, that French in it, and that jazz in it — all those three types of music at the same time."

The origins were fairly homely, as evidenced by the name.

"Well we named it after a bean, you see. That's how we called it in French, that bean in French is a Zydeco so we called it Zydeco music, that's what we have in the country, you see, back in Louisiana.

"It's been around a lot of years, I s'pose. The one that really started Zydeco music off is Clifton Chenier. He started it off and I picked it up from him. See I was playing like all them French Cajuns was playing, so one day he said 'you know what, you're just beginning to start out at playing but I like your style.' He said, 'I want you to do like I do, play like me, and you're gonna be great.' I never was in a band with him but he's just a good friend of mine and I used to go to his dances and listen to him play Zydeco music and I always did like that style, how he was mixing up French and blues and jazz, that was *fantastick*. So you see one day he told me: 'Man, I love your style and you play very well. But you're playing nach'al French — you got to make a little boogie in there like I do, and you're gonna be a great musician.' So I said: 'I'm gonna do that.' And I started that and it's working — it sure is!"

Clifton would perhaps have been the more famous of the two, except that Rockin' Dopsie was the one that took Cambridge by storm and so is very much in the British limelight. Dopsie feels that as far as style goes, there's nothing to choose between himself and Chenier.

"You can't tell the difference between me an' him cause we play just alike. If you close your eyes or you turn your back and the music is playing, you might say: 'that's Clifton Chenier' and it'll be Rockin' Dopsie all the time. There are only two guys that play that style, we're the only two. We got other musicians, they try but they never can get it together. I guess I was just made to pick it up, you see."

Part of the reason for his affinity with the music was rooted in his early dissatisfaction with the traditional accordion of Cajun music, an instrument that his father played in a dance band. With the accordion growing in popularity in English music (my own opinion, backed





up by a number of unexpected eventualities such as seeing Christine McVie of Fleetwood Mac wielding one; his comments on his choice of instrument are interesting.

"See, mine is not a French Cajun accordion, I couldn't learn on that one, I was made to play French music, but with a different accordion. It's a triple accordion I play, a button triple accordion. I got three rows of keys on the right and the Cajun accordion have one row of keys and it's way smaller. But what I got there is exactly a blues style accordion — you can't play that music on a nach'al French one, they got a pretty sound but they're too small. I'm gonna take my accordion and play the same song I play on a French accordion and that's different like night and day. They don't sound alike. Cajun French accordion is just nach'al French, you can't mix no blues on that or jazz, you just don't have enough notes to go around and give a taste of this and a taste of that, so you got to just play French. So that's the difference I have on my accordion."

For those who have looked in the Hohner catalogue and found nothing listed under "Nach'al French Accordion", the instrument Dopsie describes sounds very like what the English call a melodeon, although there's still a wide choice to choose from. You have to order accordions like his, Dopsie says, from Hohner.

"What's a really good common accordion is that keyboard like Clifton plays — he plays a different accordion than I play — he plays a keyboard style piano accordion. But you can't get those accordions like I play anywhere 'cause when I was in England last July I went around shopping to see what accordions they had in the shops. I see'd a lot of keyboards like Clifton play, but I didn't see no triple accordions at all."

If the July visit was a disappointment as far as accordion shops were concerned, it was a massive success in every other respect. He had, in his own words: "been famous" for 14 years before he tried his music out on English audiences, and he certainly did not expect the reception he got.

"They really liked my style, over here. You see I thought well I'm going to England, I'm going to try there, I don't know whether they'll like it but I'm going to try because at least I think they going to listen and see what it sounds like. But they did more than listen — they got into it right away and it was like I'd been here for years. They behaved like they were familiar with that music. And I got people saying 'man, it really shakes me up, it makes my skin crawl on me. When you start up that accordion my skin looks like it just wants to jump off!' That's the kind of excitement they got. So that made me put more into it, you see."

He came to England on a Zydeco Crusade, and he's very enthusiastic about making converts, not only for people to listen to Zydeco, but to play it as well. Mentioning its phenomenal

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popularity in the States, ("going to the Zydeco" being the latest thing there it would seem) he advises anyone wanting to get into music to (literally) jump on the Zydeco band-wagon.

"Cause you see, already people are very interested in it over here — really blowing their mind up with that music. See when I be jumping up an' down and the people be jumping up an' down an' hollerin' it just makes me feel I'm back home. Back home that's how they do — they dance, they keep jumping and hollering because you know it's that beat we got in there. You could play one of your songs that you have over here and then get one of mine, and that's a different beat. This beat I got here is goin' make you *move*, you're goin' tap your foot, shake your head, and there's *no way* you can be quiet. . . ."

But the European visit was more than a tour, even a crusading tour. Part of Dopsie's object was to widen his range of material.

"You see quite a lot of those songs I write myself, but there's some songs I copy after somebody — but I arrange it and I play it my way because you can't take no other man's song and come up with it just like he got it, just like you can't sell other people's music, you gotta have a kind of your own. So I would take one of BB King, you know, but I arrange it with Zydeco music. I can arrange any song — I have to go around the music stores and buy some of your English records that you all have here and bring them to the States, arrange it, and put Zydeco in it. I don't know exactly which record yet — I'll have to go around those shops and see what I can get, but I could take 'most any one, and then I'm gonna surprise the people from England with their own music in this style so they go: 'Say, I wrote that, I really did, but look it's Zydeco now!'

"Course in France, it's different again because that music came from France and I'm just bringing it back to them with a different style — I put their music and my music together and I think they're gonna make a hurricane. I met a few people from France already and they said 'boy, we wasn't even thinkin' . . . they said 'you're gonna make a killing over there and I'm just packing my suitcase so I can be there when you hit.'"

Part of the appeal of Zydeco is undoubtedly the beat — the irresistible push-pull rhythm of the accordion. Has it, however, a message, as blues might be said to have?

Rockin' Dopsie furrows his brow in thought. "Let me put it like this. Blues is like you was hard working man and like you're lonesome, you're very lonely, and you're singin' the blues you know because it's sad, and what you're doin' there is hard, hard work and you're hopin' not to work that way all your life. People saying like they do say well I'm a hard-working man, but it won't be like this always. People started the blues and I reckon jazz too in New Orleans. You see I reckon jazz and blues started in New Orleans, but Zydeco came from France and Canada so we just took it up and put it all together so we could make a

ROCKIN' DOPSIE



big bean out of it — Zydeco. "Yeah. But Zydeco grow out in the field — you got to be out in a field pullin' a sack or bucket, breakin' them beans, you know — that's what it's all about." He's been through all that himself.

"I came from a very poor family. Yes, I've done that with those beans. We were in the country and we used to farm, but I told my mother one day I said: 'Mama, one day I'm gonna set you up pretty so you won't have to do this no mo'.' Well she said: 'Son, I don't know what you're talkin' about.' Well, I said: 'I'm thinkin' about going into Zydeco music' and she told me: 'I hope you all the luck in the world, but I don't see what way you're gonna make it.' I said: 'I'm gonna surprise you one of these days.' And believe me it came just like that. My mother's living in a beautiful home, we're living in the city and like everything is beautiful and everytime I think of that I tell my mother, that Zydeco is still working! And she just laugh and says, well, I don't know what got into you but you had a good idea, and I knew you was going to make it because you was very *interested*. . . ."

Musically, as domestically, Rockin' Dopsie gives every appearance of being where he wants to be.

"I really started Zydeco in 1953, that was when my first recording was, and I was so excited, man, I nearly caught a heart attack. Zydeco music is really that accordion and that scrub-board and that's how I started, just the two of us for four-five years. That's real Zydeco — some pople use this triangle you know but I don't use that I just have the washboard and now I have a saxophone, guitar, bass, and drums — and I do the rest with my accordion. That accordion, you know, it's the *Grand-Daddy*. I got a good band — the only thing I'm thankin' about is I'm thankin' about getting me a fiddler, that might be a little taste of something new. Yeah, you could mix fiddle with Zydeco, you see that's the way them Cajuns play, and if you get the right accordion and you play French and Zydeco together with that fiddle, man, I think that's goin' to be a big hit. So if I can get me a good fiddler who can really get into it, that's

what I'll do, and if you notice how good those fiddlers go with French accordion then it'll be really something else with the Zydeco accordion."

That's the only addition to the band he would consider. He has a son of his own who's "great on Zydeco" and may one day "take my shoes", but just as he never played with Clifton Chenier, Dopsie wouldn't go on stage with his son. It would be a good idea but. . . .

"Two accordions playing together ain't no way. No, that won't work. At least it can sound good but they can't play together, you'll have to play each in turn, I'll play a bit and then I'll have to back up and he'll play a bit — pretty complicated, especially with the kind of music we play."

Which music relies heavily on improvisation backed by a very tight rhythm section. It's a spontaneous kind of playing, as Dopsie suggests when he describes the progress, fairly rapid by many standards, of a song from the concept to the performance.

"You see sometimes I'm lying down at night and if I think of a song I have to get up and play that. I dream those things you know — sometimes the whole song comes just like a nightmare, and then I just take my accordion and play it. It may be the Devil, I don't know, but even if it is the Devil I don't care about that. They do say a nightmare is the Devil, don't they? Well, either way it might be midnight, two o'clock and three o'clock but I'm gonna grab my accordion and play that song. Then the next night we got a job, so I tell my boys we got somethin' new tonight, they say what you got? Well, I say, I dreamed up something last night, but they don't know I already played it by myself at home, they say 'boy, you're a devil, you do anything you wanna do.' It works like that, you see, that's the way we always do it, they just come in with the music just like that — we don't have to rehearse. We don't never rehearse, we just play. That's how easy it is to play Zydeco music. You see you shouldn't need to rehearse. I know one band they rehearse two three times a week — I say 'why do you rehearse like that, you ain't getting any better.' Rehearse don't do nothin' — you got to have it in your head — put it into your head and leave it there. . . ."

So there you have it. As Zydeco music gets into more and more people's heads, Rockin' Dopsie has accepted a re-invitation to the Cambridge Folk Festival in July, and no doubt that will be the basis of a British if not European tour. A new album which concentrates on Zydeco cover versions of various R&B hits is in the pipeline, and after that Dopsie told me (with the air of a man who'd thought of it two minutes ago) that he plans to put out a further album entitled *Zydeco Will Never Die*.

"Because music is the one thing. Everything else will go but music will never die. You see Zydeco is something you eats, I mean it's something you grows. It's just beans, you know, and that's why we named it after beans. Because it's always gonna be around. . . ."

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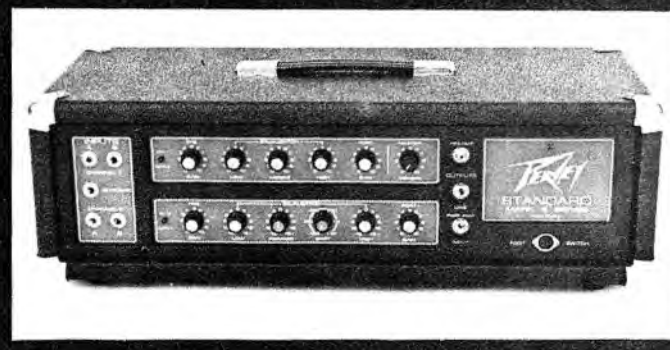
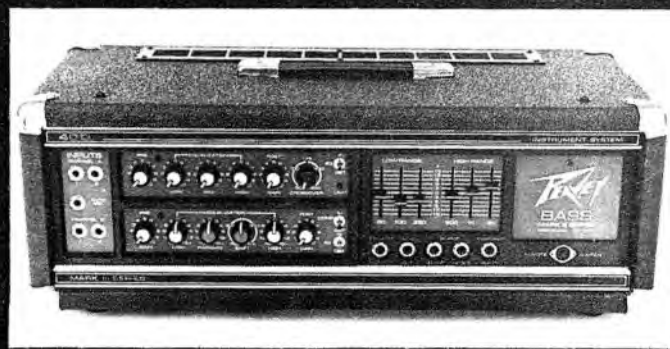
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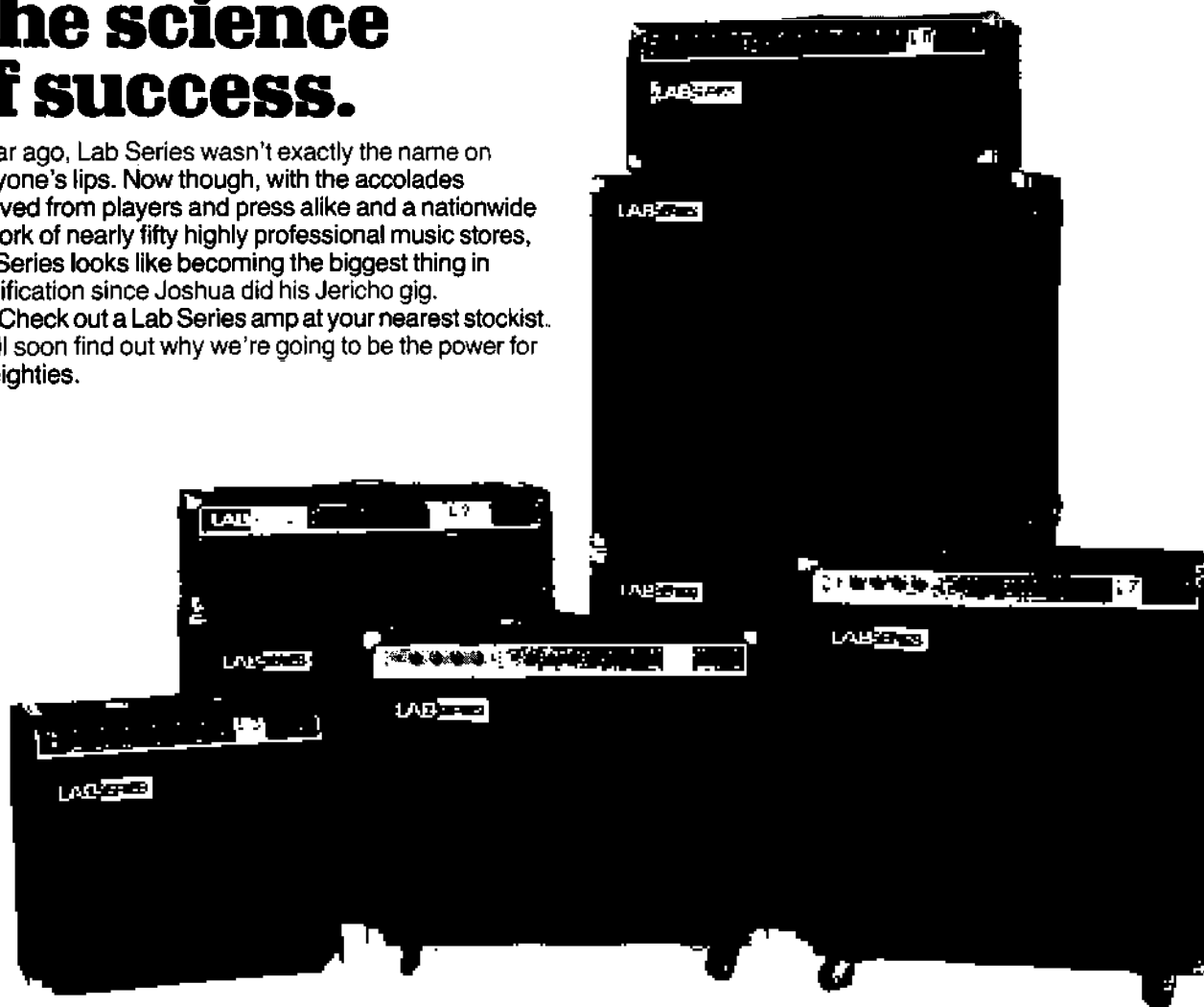
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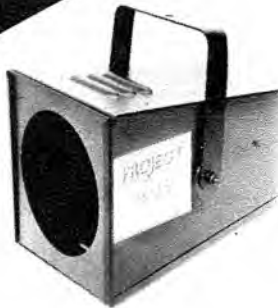
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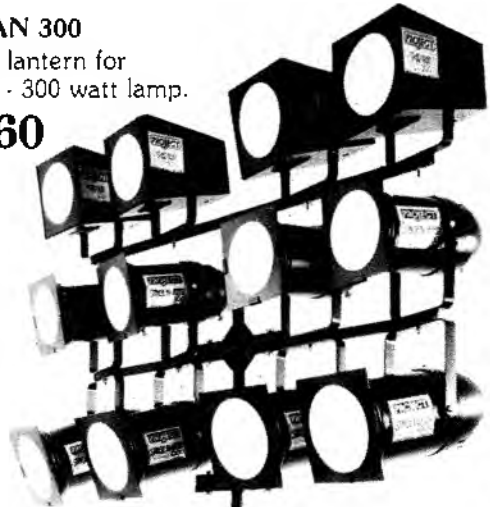
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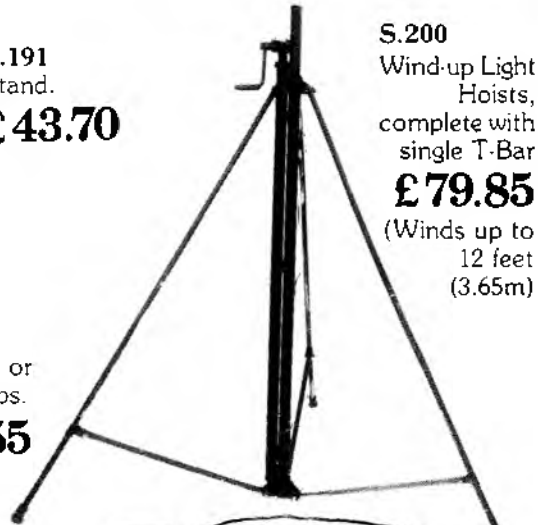
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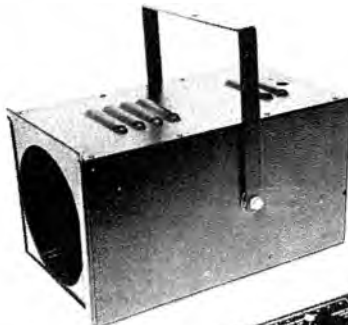
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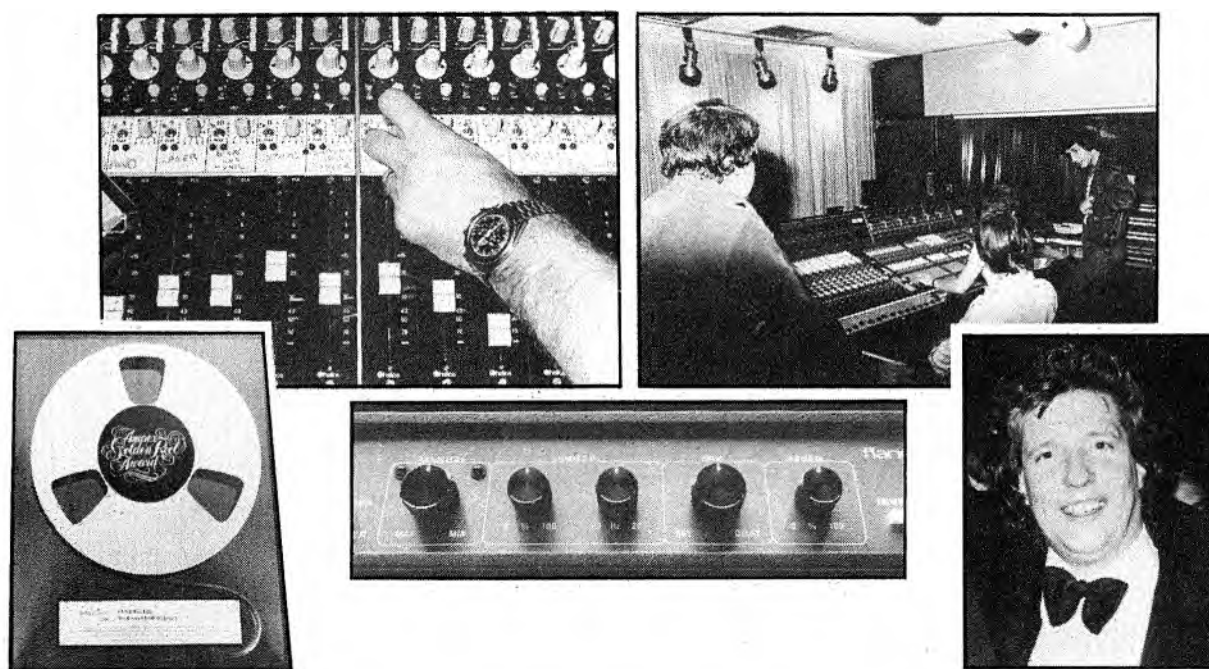
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RECORDING WORLD



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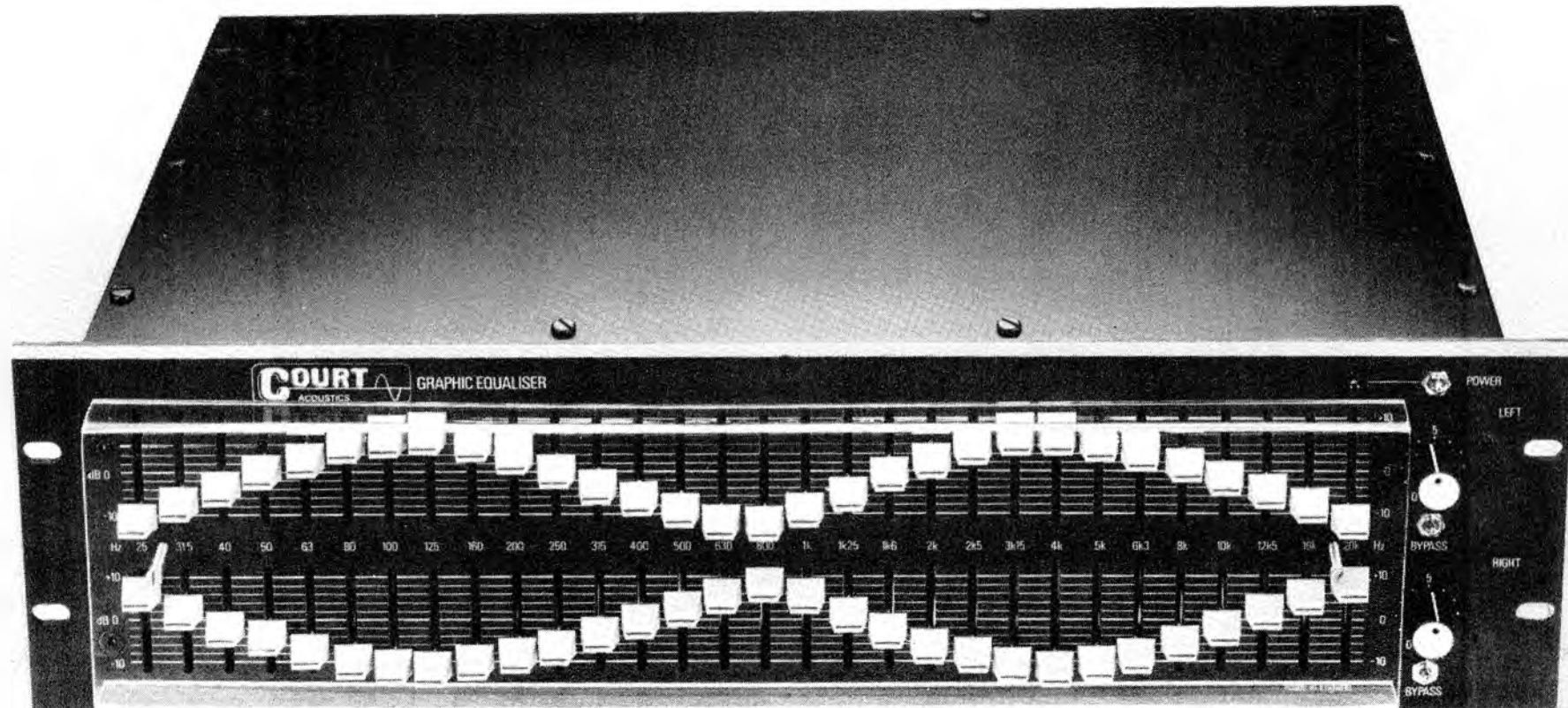
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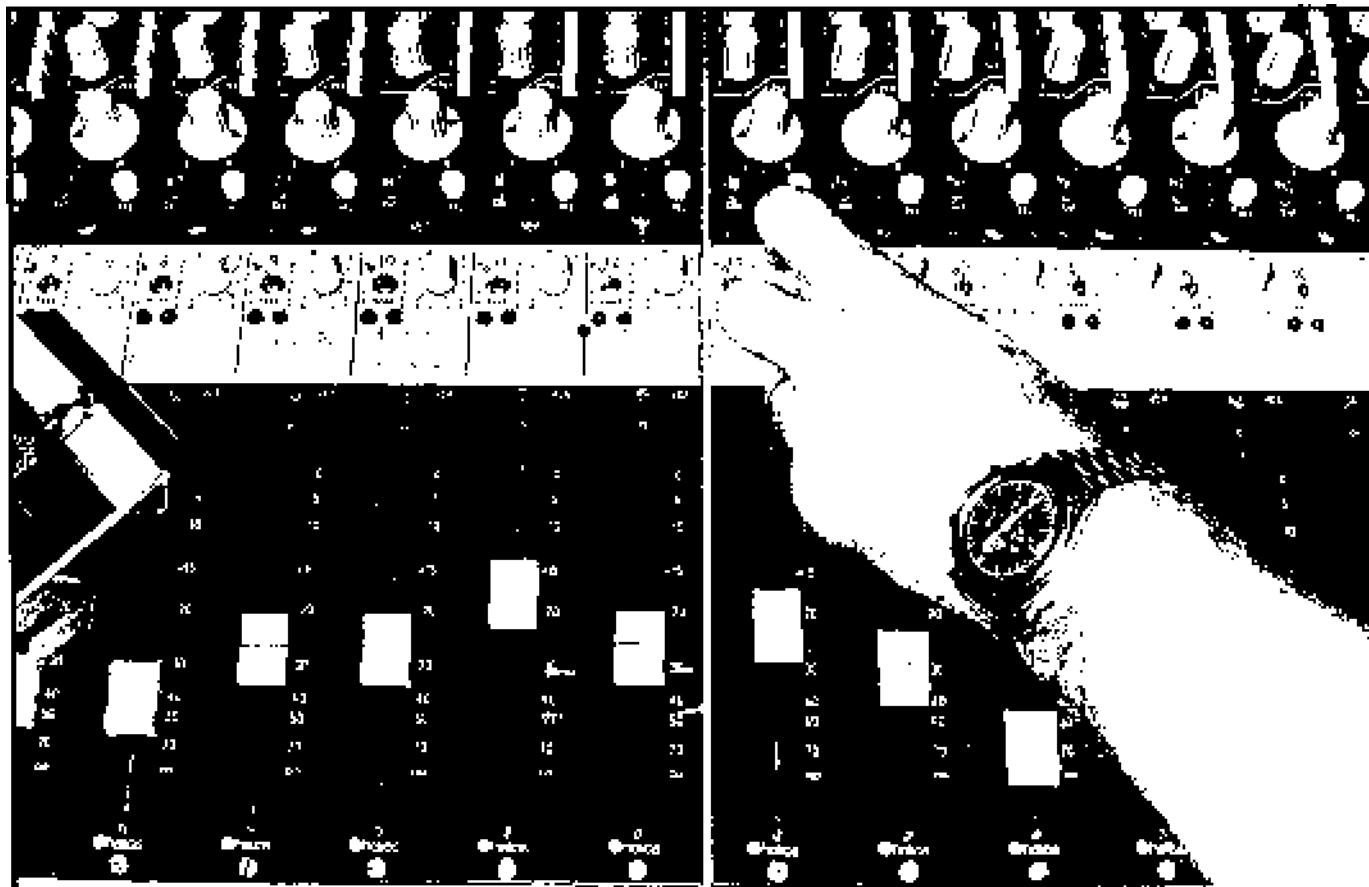


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Studio Recording for the 80's

EDITING



Many artists, producers and record companies seek out particular engineers because they "get a great sound" or they "do amazing mixes." They rarely ever search the country to find an engineer who "does great edits," yet often during those "great sound" and "amazing mix" sessions, there are always edits to be made. Just as any competent photographer must know how to crop his pictures, a good engineer has to be good at editing and be creative as well.

Editing is seemingly the most important/unimportant function of the recording chain. A function that takes place between every step of making a record. It is even a factor after the record has been made.

Editing is most commonly

viewed as a process used to shorten a long tune which might be quite suitable for album play — 4½ minutes up to 25 minutes, which is about as much as the best cut disc will hold — down to a single 45 rpm radio airplay time (3:00-3:40 min average). Most of the time this is done in a fairly straightforward fashion: Intro, Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Bridge, Chorus, Fade, and is theoretically a fairly simple task.

I tend to place various types of editing into two general categories. The first I call "Editing For Work" because, when you have to shorten or rearrange a poor tune or performance, it's *work*. In the end some of the editing cuts may help a little, but it usually ends up strengthening the realization of the painful reality that a

bad record is still a bad record.

You're involved in a session and you're laying down the basic tracks on a multi-track tape. A musician decides to stop eight bars into the fade — not very much time for the singer to ad lib — because he didn't feel that the take was "happening." And of course everyone else on the track follows suit and stops playing because somebody has obviously dropped out. After five or six hours and twenty odd takes, the producer feels this was, in fact, the "magic" take. Crisis? Not really. You try another take and this time the guilty musician gets his part down spotlessly, but the overall take is definitely not happening. Crisis? No, just extra work for the engineer. If you're lucky, you can find a fade from an earlier take that

matches tempo and splice it onto the end of the eight-bar fade from the "magic" take. If you're *real* lucky, the band will play an insert fade to finish off the "magic" take. Two swift cuts and a second later, you've got a complete "magic" take.

If overtime starts to rear its ugly head on the local union clock and/or the producer has lost faith in the musicians and the entire recording process, all eyes will turn to you, anticipating the extra work you're gonna have to do. You must first copy the existing eight bars on the track to another multi-track machine. Copy as many times as you need to get the desired amount of bars for the fade. Well, three cuts and half hour to an hour later you've got one magic take with a 32-bar fade (the last 24 being *second generation*) — not ex-

"Hardly a day goes by where I won't be slashing away at a client's future million seller."

actly the ideal utilization of studio time! However, your ingenuity has saved the day. And this takes us over to Category 2. "Creative Editing."

Many a long or superfluously arranged tune has found its way into the Top 40 charts because of a clever or inconspicuous "deleting" job. Oddly enough, when your only involvement in a record is editing the single, it's difficult to get any label copy credit. First, because the theoretically unimportant editing would then become too important. Second, because, psychologically, the record buyer and the DJ would like to think that the final "edited" single version of the song is the way it was originally recorded. So you'd better settle for your credit up front and enjoy the edited version as you hear it on your favourite Top 40 radio station.

King Crimson's "Court of the Crimson King" was doing quite well on its own as an album track, yet it found its way to millions of American listeners via the Top 40 edited single version. Cerrone's "Love In C Minor," one of the first disco tunes to take up the whole side of an album, had a lot of success in the discos in the original form. But, with the airplay it received from the edited single, it had even greater success. Ironically enough, along with disco came the concept of editing for length. Since people needed more than five minutes to get into a dancing groove, "disco-length" versions of songs soon emerged, either done on the two-track or in the mixing stage.

Mixing and editing are inseparable. Back in my early days, I prided myself on mixing a tune straight through, with all of the cues spot on. I heard wild tales of how some engineers — especially these English chaps — could or would only mix in sections, mixing a piece here and there and then, when each section

was perfect, editing them all together.

I always viewed a mixing console as an instrument, so I felt like a superior musician since I could get the spontaneity that just can't be achieved from section mixing. But even though they weren't getting spontaneity, they were freer to experiment with different "treatments" of various sections, creating radical and (usually) pleasant section depth changes — rather than socking it to 'em purely on the basis of "feel."

I soon found those glorious "one pass" mixes of mine becoming harder to attain, because I'd eventually end up fighting the No. 1 natural enemy of mankind — Human Error. Usually, quality decreases as quantity increases. And, as my work load increased, after too many hours of racking my brain, trying to get all those cues right while still copping a "feel," I slowly conceded to using a blade for a mix. If I got at least half way through a tune and then missed a cue, I'd stop the mix, set up for the mixed cue(s), start the tape and splice them together. Starting with this simple and handy concession to evolving technology, I soon started editing sections from different mixes to make one optimally mixed tune. These days, hardly a day goes by where I won't be without a razor blade in my hands, slashing away at a client's future million seller.

Of course, with computers around to lend a helping hand with level and cue memory, section mixing becomes both more and less necessary — depending on whether you use the computer as a programmed, self-contained section organizer with slight variations, or as a helping hand with each "pass" at a section in an almost total update mode for spontaneous alterations. If the second example is the case, then editing no doubt plays as integral a part in the mixing as would pulling down the old

"master fader" for the grand finale — "It's a fade!!"

In a recording session, multi-track editing can be used creatively with some very rewarding results. By using sections from outtakes (of the same track), where some amazing licks or incredible tightness occurred between the musicians and overall sound, you can embellish an already together and happening final take.

During the recording for Michael Narada Walden's first solo album, *I Cry, I Smile*, the studio was filled with a variety of great musicians, from Carlos Santana and David Sancious on through a list too numerous to get into, not to mention Narada himself. In the control room was Tom Dowd, ex-ace engineer and present-day producer extraordinaire, producing. Dennis McKay, an engineer who'd contributed to many rock and jazz-rock fusion hits of the Seventies, and I shared the engineering duties along with an assistant whose skill and knowledge probably matched our own, without the experience. So there was no shortage of talent or ability in either room.

Most of the tunes had extremely different sections, ranging from classical into jazz, rock and funk and, with the amount of soloing and ad lib comping by the musicians, editing became a necessary routine every three or four takes. Dennis and myself were sharing the editing load, doing two or three in a row, then passing the function on. Even our assistant Randy Mason took a stab at a few. After a few days of this, Tom Dowd (no stranger to editing!) must have wanted to get in on the fun because, in addition to directing this particular edit, he emerged from behind the producer's desk very serious and determined, with blade and grease pencil in hand, proclaiming "This edit's mine!" He then proceeded to meet the challenge by executing that "perfect edit."

Many times a tune is recorded and, after spending a couple of days with the rough track, you find the actual structure needs changing or additions. I've come across this problem many times, and basically you can cut the new sections with the same musicians in the same studio, within a reasonable amount of time, and splice it into the original take — or copy the sections you'd like to lengthen as I discussed earlier. Even though it can be very difficult and is not recommended as regular procedure, you can also use different takes from different musicians recorded weeks apart and sometimes create some clever moods which might have been impossible for either group of musicians to create on their own.

One particular heartbreaking editing experience happened with a major supergroup — the second cut on the second side of the second album. The guitarist brought me five tapes worth of guitar solos to put together into one 20 second solo! Needless to say, this was a royal pain-in-the-ass and took forever, but I finally came up with a usable solo that got the guitarist's approval. Ironically, there was a clumsy edit in the middle of the solo and even though I pointed it out to him, he insisted I leave it in because it "felt right." Turns out that many aspiring guitarists of the day copied the solo note for note, including this editing aberration, thinking this instrumental passage was nothing but sheer genius.

Jimmy Douglass

Jimmy Douglass spent much of his career as a house producer with Atlantic Records in New York working with such acts as the Stones, Otis Redding, King Curtis, Hall and Oates and Foreigner. He now works as a freelance producer in New York.

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Ampex Golden Reel Award

Some of you may well have come across the words "Golden Reel Award" in recent months and wondered what it was all about. This is a project which was started in the United States about three years ago, partly as a promotion scheme for Ampex recording products, but also as a means of highlighting the more important aspects of making a hit record.

As Philip Vaughan and Justin Underwood of Ampex Great Britain Ltd. pointed out to me, when a record is released, or when it is successful, it is not often that the recording and production team manage to get any recognition. When the award is made, it goes to not only the artist and producer, but also the engineer and the studio itself, without which, it must be agreed, the recording would never have come about in the first place! Everyone is aware of the amount of time, effort and creativity which a recording engineer puts into his work — all those long hours of concentration and creative ideas — and now for the first time he can find some reward and recognition.

There are a few requirements which must be fulfilled before an award is made and these are, firstly and most obviously, that the whole thing must have been recorded and mastered on Ampex tape of some kind, and secondly it must reach a minimum number of sales. These will be in accordance with the specific country's industry standards for Gold Record Status (in the US the requirement is 500,000 units for albums and 1,000,000 for singles).

Once it is established that a record has met all these requirements the procedure is that Ampex will probably get in touch with the artists. They keep a watchful eye on the studios to which they supply tape and therefore are almost always aware of what is going on. They will then arrange for a presentation to take place at the convenience of both the artists and the studio.

Another commendable aspect of this award is that Ampex donate \$1,000 (about £500) to any non-profit charity organization of the artist's choice and in the artist's name. They have contributed more than \$150,000 to worthy causes since the award began.

The award plaque itself is indeed quite impressive and is certainly a nice way for anyone to remember a recording gig. It features a large, gold covered metal tape reel and an engraved plate with the individual recipient's name, the title of the winning record, the name of the studio and an inscription describing the significance of the awards.

Awards which have been made in the States include the Bee Gees, Blondie, Kiss, Supertramp, Bob Dylan, Roberta Flack, Billy Joel, Donna Summer and many more. The first Golden Reel to be awarded internationally outside the USA was to Abba and their excellent technicians at Polar Studios in Stockholm, Sweden. The LP concerned was *Voulez Vous*, which was recorded and mastered entirely on Ampex Grand Master, by engineer Michael Tretow. The album reached gold status in both the USA and Scandinavia as well as in most European countries, with over five million copies sold to date and figures still rising.

The first UK award went to the Kinks and their technical team at their Konk Studio in London. It was made in respect of their album *Low Budget* which was recorded at Konk and in the USA. Released in the USA in July and in the UK in September, the album was the band's first gold album in the USA.

Funnily enough, the next award went to Konk Studios again — this time to Leslie McKeown (remember the Bay City Rollers? Well he's nothing like that anymore!) The album *All Washed Up* was released in Tokyo and went gold remarkably quickly, which is hardly surprising since he is extremely popular out there. This



ABBA



Les McKeown

was his first solo album, and the second, which no doubt is destined to enjoy the same success, is on its way.

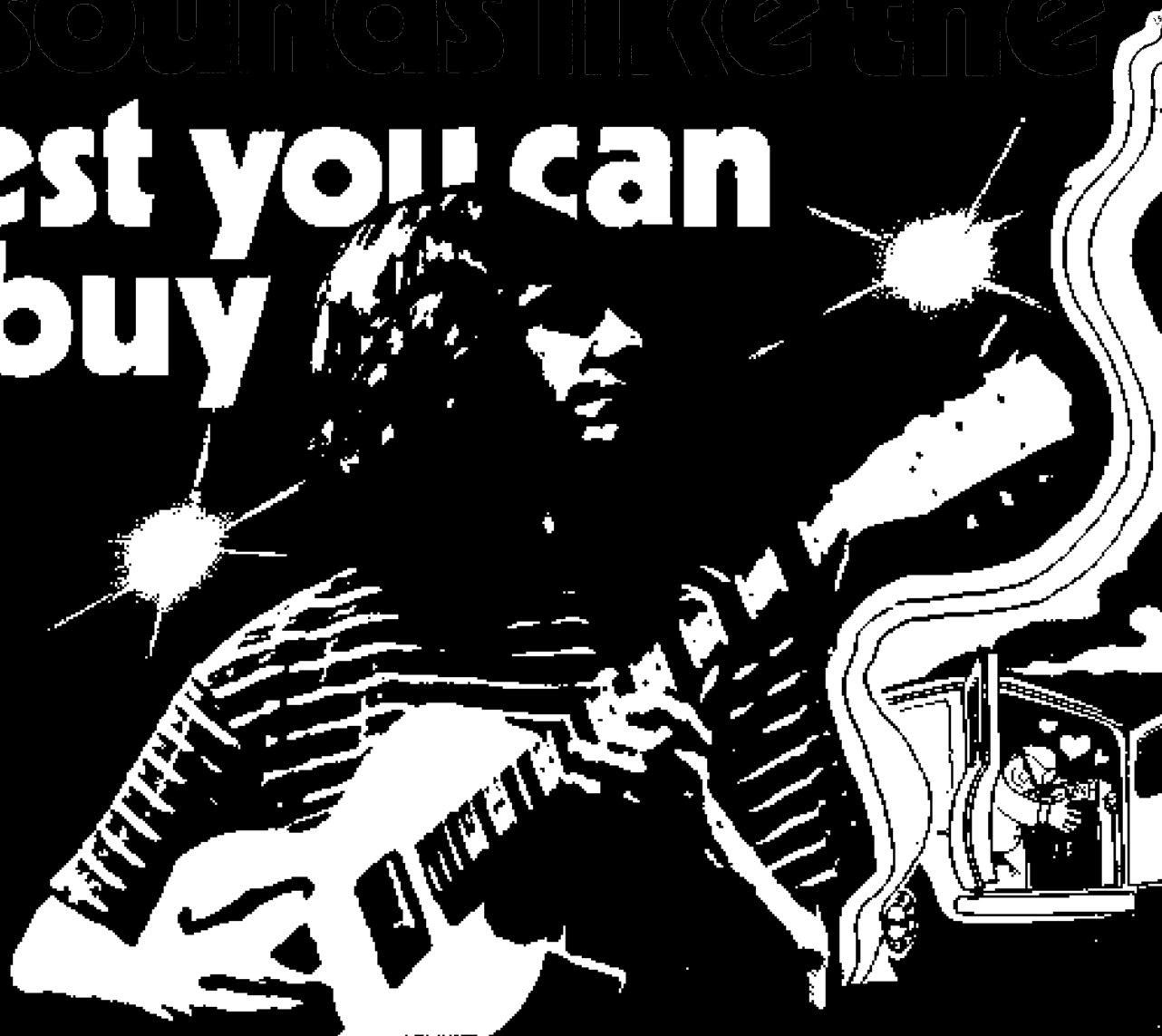
Anyway, enough of name dropping. This new award is fast gaining success and recognition within the recording world, and I have no

doubt that it will become a very important status symbol and coveted prize in the future. And thank you Ampex for having the awareness to think not only of the artist but of the production team and everybody involved behind the scenes.

Janet Angus

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The Producers

ROY THOMAS BAKER

"I never rated myself as an engineer", said Roy Thomas Baker, and, sitting there in front of him, you'd never have figured he'd had anything to do with such tedious stuff as labouring over a control desk through hours of overdubs, checking levels and pushing levers.

In fact, he looked more like some sort of international playboy, tidily ensconced in his suite at one of the poshest Manhattan hotels. He readily lived up to the plush decor; clad in leather jumpsuit and ascot, his gently-rounded face adorned by large-framed spectacles with tinted lenses.

But, not much of an engineer? Let's face it, Baker forged a distinctive recorded sound that has been an integral part of the vinyl identities of two major bands, Queen and the Cars. Is he kidding? No way:

"I won awards and set trends, but to me engineering was just a stepping stone, an apprenticeship." Speaking of trends, one of the most memorable he helped establish was one of engineers becoming producers, particularly in Britain, where A&R departments usually trained their own people to produce. "They'd have them sit next to the producer and time songs, fill out musicians' union forms — be an assistant producer. At Decca, where I started, one of their downfalls was taking their producers from the company instead of using all the talent they had in the studio, like myself, Bill Price and Gus Dudgeon, to name but a few."

Roy Baker had been determined to be a producer since he was 12 years old. "It wasn't just a musical thing. I was intrigued to find that records had different sounds. In those days you could actually hear where the records were recorded; there was the Tamla-Motown sound, the Phil Spector sound, the New York and LA studios, and Nashville and all those other funny places. Now you have to look on the label to see where they're recorded."

In any case, Baker was into the thick of recording by the time he'd hit his middle teens. "They wouldn't hire anybody over the age of 18, and you'd start as teaboy and work up through the ranks to become a second engineer. My case was different. Not everybody wanted to do classical, most wanted to do pop sessions, but I quite liked classical, so my first session was as a second engineer", which meant that he assisted and learned from the tape operator, who in turn assisted the engineer. By the time the Merseybeat boom rolled around, he'd become an assistant engineer, and eventually he found himself working

with bands like Ten Years After and Savoy Brown as a proper engineer.

Unfortunately, that was a cul-de-sac, and Roy soon moved on to the independent studios, briefly stopping at Morgan and then settling at Trident. (This was '60-'70, when he worked on Free's second album and the *Fire and Water* follow-up at those studios.) "Trident was the first eight-track studio in Europe — but it was an American machine, an Ampex, and it had a 60-cycle motor to be powered by our European 50-cycle mains." But ways were found to make it work out well, and Baker's reputation was further enhanced. Meanwhile the desire to be a producer hadn't died.

At Trident, Baker worked alongside other engineers who later became producers like Ken Scott and Robin Cable. Both have had success as producers, but neither can match Baker for his distinctive sound and its commercial impact. Why?

"I disregarded engineering and they haven't. They worked to be both engineers and producers. I didn't. For some people, engineering is the only route to becoming a producer, but when they actually get to be one, all they're doing is selling their engineering talents and crediting themselves as producers. I now have Ian Taylor to do the engineering for me." But it was through pooling his interests with Cable that Baker came into contact with Queen.

He'd already produced one album, Nazareth's second. After engineering their first LP and finding the band had no one lined up to do the second, he offered his services to them on the grounds that he'd engineered for them, knew them as people, and "in those days, I came cheap!" The resulting *Exercises*, however, was too apt a name, for all the potential it displayed. However, with only the one production under his belt, Baker had formed a production company with Cable and others, tagging along when the latter went to look in on a demo session. "It was funny, he was going down to see the band and I was along to see the studio!" But the band was Queen, the song they were taping was "Keep Yourself Alive", and Baker thought they were simply amazing.

"They didn't have a deal at the time, or even a manager. We recorded the first album on downtime at Trident, and the studio wanted to shop the album around. What happened, though, was that they brought in this pseudo-flash American guy to do it, and he came over mainly for another artist that Trident was attempting to make an album with, Eugene Wallace, and so he was actually



shopping the Wallace tape and just happened to have the Queen tape along — 'as long as I'm here, give this a listen too!'"

EMI went for it, of course, and the rest is history. "The first two Queen albums gave us the opportunity to let out every conceivable idea we'd ever had," recalled Baker, and even though the records had their flaws, the realization that Queen was a band to be reckoned with was not long in coming. By the time *Sheer Heart Attack* was released, even the generally unprogressive US mass market had begun to take the band seriously, and when Baker produced Be Bop Deluxe and gave them that same edgy, nervous sound, people began to talk about it as belonging to Roy Thomas Baker. What was the story behind that unique, high-ended sound?

"Ah! That's distortion," he chuckled. "A lot of that was me and a lot of that

“Successful means having the top five albums”

was Queen letting me do what I wanted because they liked it. I love treble. I love treble and bass, I hate middle. Americans were all going for that middle sound at the time, and in fact it took that bloody gadget, the Aphex Aural Exciter, before Americans learned to put treble on records. It was the 16 to 20K (kilocycle) end. People say you can't hear above 16K, but it has a harmonic effect on all the other frequencies down.

“But it was not just a case of engineering sounds, it was a sound concept. I was working towards a way of expressing myself and Queen wanted that sound, they wrote and arranged for it too. We used to call it ‘crystal’ — ‘Shall we have more crystal on that?’ — but I never really thought about the technical specifics of it at the time.”

But even a producer as creative as Roy Thomas Baker must alter his approach. *Sheer Heart Attack* had not yet broken Queen as a major act when Baker produced *Rhinos*, *Winos* and *Lunatics* for the Welsh band, Man. “I’d mixed their previous album and took a turn at producing them the next time.” Man’s ever-shifting line-up hardly changed the essential character of the band, which mixed simple, pub rock & roll with dual guitar (and sometimes a keyboard as well) improvisation, almost like a somewhat progressive, slightly tougher version of the Quicksilver Messenger Service. Quite a change from what Baker was used to working with, but “I like to tailor my approach, to be as sympathetic as possible to the artist. I never go into the studio without having several talks with the artists involved.”

This approach enabled him to meet the challenges of producing such diverse talents as Ian Hunter (*Overnight Angels*) and Dusty Springfield (a lushly orchestrated comeback album). No doubt it stood him in good stead when he went to the States and began working with bands like Journey.

Journey had lots of musical talent, and there was no reason they couldn’t write good enough material on which to focus their hard rock attack, “but they had two albums out that were really boring” — not to mention that they were commercial stiff — “and I put them on the right track.” It wasn’t easy; the band was evidently attached to doing things their way on their home ground, where they were always well-received. And so Baker soon found himself recording them in a Bay Area studio called His Master’s Will, which had rats — it was an oversized warehouse-type affair. Luckily for Baker, he got his way when

the mixing was moved to Cherokee in LA. How come? “His Master’s Will blew up!” He cut the next Journey album at Cherokee from start to finish.

“I like Cherokee, and also the A&R Studios in New York. Every studio has these flat speakers, Eastlakes and Westlakes and flat sounds, and I like studios where the sound isn’t built in to and sounding like everywhere else. Cherokee and A&R don’t.”

The Producers

Baker’s instructions certainly helped Journey, who began to rise into the US charts with the Baker-produced LPs. “Even now that I’m no longer working with them, they’re still writing more immediate songs and curbing the showy, lengthy solos. My training, you know.”

Meanwhile, while in New York overseeing the mastering of the first Journey LP, Baker was asked by Elektra to nip up to Boston for a look at a band called the Cars. “I met them at the hall in the middle of this blizzard. They’d had lots of record company people and producers up there to see them, and all of them had said no. I agreed to produce them on the spot. The songs were basically there, they just needed to be re-arranged slightly — a chorus put in here, a verse taken out there and the speed had to be adjusted — but apart from that, they were excellent.” Once again, that nervous, trebly Baker sound emerged; true, it was another variation, but acutely keyed to the Cars’ slightly out-of-kilter, on-the-brink sensibility.

A larger adjustment had to be made with Ronnie Wood’s *Grimme Some Neck*. “It was sort of a put-together thing. We had a castle and stuck some equipment in it... it was a fun album. It couldn’t be approached with an eye to having ‘X’ number of hit singles on it, since it was basically a biography of a member of the Stones at that time of his life. The Stones just don’t take all of it that seriously, so you can’t either.”

Baker listens to lots of tapes sent him by various labels. “The way I listen to any new tape is I set my little JVC up by the shower in the morning. I’m hung over, I’m tired, I’m feeling grotty — the worst possible conditions to listen to tapes under. But, if it cuts through that, it’ll cut through anything.” That’s how Baker latched onto his latest project, an album with Hilly Michaels for Warner Brothers. “Warners, as do other com-

panies, send me tapes for second opinions, and I listened to the one of Hilly they sent in my usual way. Then Ian Hunter rang me up and said, ‘Oh, I’ve got to tell you something’, and I said, ‘Tell me later. Now, what’s this Hilly Michaels about?’ and he said, ‘That’s what I called to tell you! He was the drummer on my tour, and he’s got all these good songs’.”

Dan Hartman (“Instant Replay”) is involved, with the playing and arranging, but in case anyone gets the wrong idea, Baker characterized the record as having “Abba-like songs, but with more of a rock beat.” (Abba are one of Baker’s favourites, but he mourns their move towards disco.)

“We’ve got all my friends on the album, really; Ellen Foley, Greg Hawkes of the Cars, and one number has Hilly singing one part and Liza Minelli and Lorna Luft singing the other.” He reckons the album will fill the vacuum left by disco, “basic rock that you can dance to.”

In closing, we spoke of generalities. Kilocycles aside, Baker aims for a sound that jumps out of the speakers, and arrangements that never let up, “even when there’s a quiet bit, there’s always power and tension behind it. Continual movement.” It’s not always easy, but he wants to get the best out of the artists he works with. Sometimes it means coming down to confrontations, but, as he laughingly noted, “I took a course in child psychology. Seriously, I don’t really have that much trouble with musicians. They are often simply too close to their music, but usually they are more than willing to try my suggestions.” I wondered why more English musicians didn’t seek him out now, and he said that he thought his name was near to mud in Britain these days, as though he’d sold out by having moved to the States.

Finally, I asked him how successful he thought he was. Admittedly his own harshest critic in some ways, he declined crediting himself with great success: “Successful means having the top five albums.” Demanding? “Oh, I suppose success as a producer means that in five years people will be able to look back at one or two of the things I have worked on, like ‘Bohemian Rhapsody,’ and say that they still stand up. Just like people have said I was a good engineer now that I’m a producer, they’ll say I was a good producer of records in the next phase of my career.”

The next phase?

“Certainly. I plan to go into video. It’s the medium of the future.”



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On Test

The MXR Flanger/Doubler

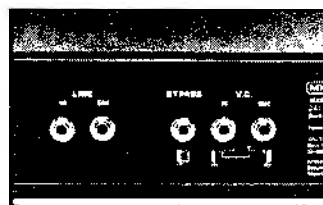
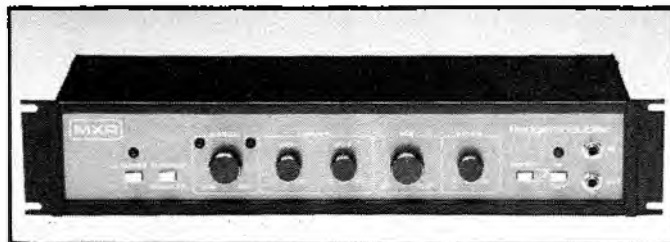
The MXR Flanger/Doubler is not a new unit but this is the first time we have looked at it in any depth. It was one of the first "professional" analogue flangers available at a price within reach of the smaller studio or musician. The mode of operation may be switched between flanging or doubling (really only selecting which of the two available delay ranges is used), hence its title.

In its 19-inch rack format, the flanger/doubler is immediately recognisable as MXR, being in their usual blue finish with white silk screened legends and large clearly labelled controls.

The controls on the front panel, from left to right, start with two white push buttons. The first is the power on/off with its indicator LED and the other is the already mentioned time delay range selector. Pushing it in gives the shorter delay times (flanging) and out for longer delay (doubling). Adjustment over the selected range is made by the control marked Manual giving 0.25mS to 5mS short delay at 17.5mS to 70mS long delay time.

Above the Manual control are two LED's situated to the left and right of the knob. With the sweep controls turned out, the intensity of the LED's gives a visual interpretation of the position of the Manual control in the selected delay range. For a position in the middle of the range, both LED's would be of equal intensity and turning the manual control to the left would cause an increase in the left LED intensity with a corresponding decrease on the right LED. With the sweep controls in use, the LED's give an indication of the width and speed of sweep by alternately increasing and decreasing in intensity.

The Sweep controls are width and speed, the width being the range swept about the delay selected by the manual control until the sweep is 100 per cent of the delay range and then of course the manual con-



trol has no effect. The speed of the sweep oscillator is variable between 0.3Hz and 20Hz which is a usefully wide range.

The mix control alters the ratio between the straight and dry signals in the unit output. This is followed by the Regen control which effects the amount of feedback to the input. This signal is limited dynamically and in bandwidth to increase the regeneration effect without "runaway".

The invert switch inverts the delayed signal before mixing it with the dry signal at the unit's output. Remaining on the front panel is a bypass switch with an LED indicator. When the bypass mode is selected the input is connected directly to the output with no electronics between them. This control may also be remoted from a jack socket output at the rear.

The input and output jack sockets on the front panel are designed to operate at levels suitable for musical instrument use, while the rear in and output jacks are for line level operation with a mixing console. Also on the rear are jack sockets allowing access to and from the internal oscillator. This allows external control of the sweep rate or for the internal oscillator to control another unit.

Internal Construction

Internal access is achieved by removing the end panels, enabling the entire casing to

disassemble leaving the electronics completely open. All the electronics are on one PCB running almost the entire length of the cabinet. The front rotary controls mount directly onto the board while all the cables from switches and sockets are on connectors that plug onto the board.

The PCB is supported only at two points, both on one side, the other side being supported by the connect to the rotary "pots". With all the heavier components being placed near these supports, I don't think there would be any flexing of the board even with rough use. However, continuing my campaign against unsupported lengths of wire, I would like to see all wires over about four inches secured or supported in some way. Road use causes vibration and a wire of any length over this figure is capable of vibrating separately from the rest of the unit, causing metal fatigue at its connections and eventually breakage. This is very easy to avoid by securing the wire to the frame at a couple of points.

In Use

This is a surprisingly versatile unit considering that it is really fairly basic in the available controls. It is quiet in operation and I experienced no "nasties" except that noise does increase significantly as the delay time approaches the maximum in the doubling

mode. This is inevitable with analogue devices such as this. Analogue units will have the edge on digital delay units over the short times but after 100mS they become too noisy and have too low a bandwidth to be useable for professional applications. The maximum delay on the MXR is 70mS. It is noisier than the shorter settings but is still quite useable with care (I am really referring to studio use here as it should present no problems at all for live use).

The strong point of this unit is its depth of effect particularly in a flanging mode. It is very nearly as deep as tape methods. The regeneration control has been well designed to make the feedback of musical use rather than just an effect. The width of the internal oscillator range can be used for some very unusual effects which are all easy to achieve with very little fiddling.

The manual provides a variety of "starter" settings — I particularly like the vibrato setting — and explains the principles of operation, flanging, even giving formulae to calculate the positions of frequency notches in flanging. There is a block schematic but no circuit diagram.

Summary

This is an analogue device and this should be remembered when considering any criticisms I have made. MXR make a digital delay line as well so they are aware of the limitations of analogue technology.

Despite being one of the earlier flangers available in a rapidly changing field, this unit is still a very worthwhile one to consider for its simplicity and standard of operation. I found it to be a "user's" device rather than an "experimenters" as its simplicity meant that sounds were there rather than having to be searched for.

Keith Spencer-Allen

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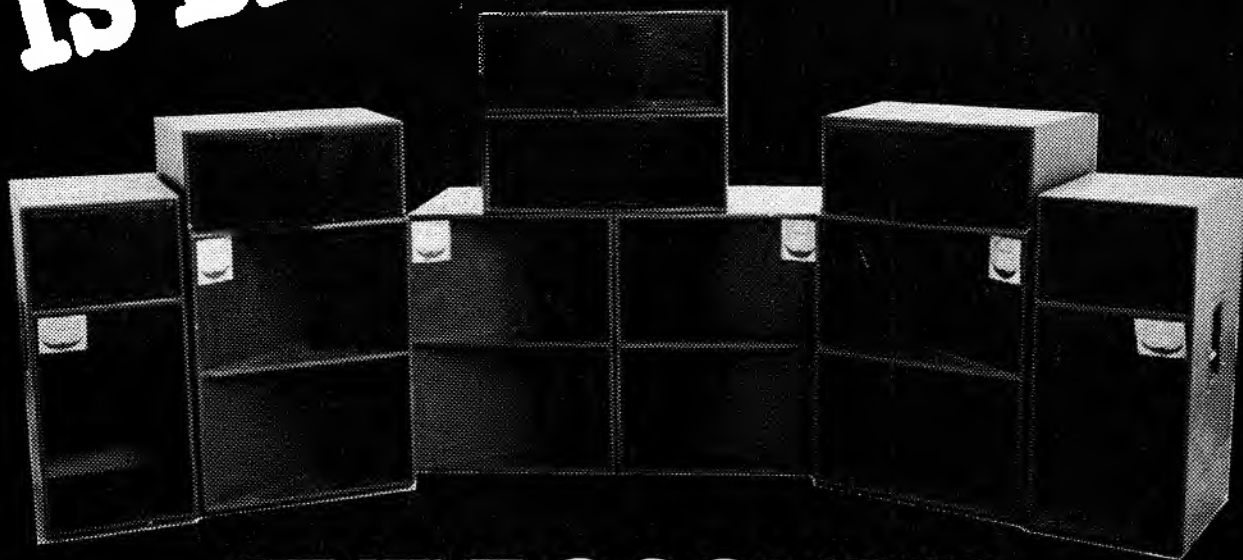
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On Test

Furman Reverb RV-1



Reverberation (or reverb as I'm going to call it from now on) is an essential element in the character of any sound either by its presence or lack of presence. Often in recording it is desirable to add reverb to a signal to enhance its quality or mask an unfavourable recording environment. This has long been realised and almost since the advent of electrical recording there has been much searching for ways of artificially creating reverb. Aside from electro-acoustic techniques involving echo chambers and primitive tape systems, the predominant methods were mechanical.

Mechanical systems could be "separated" into two distinct areas — those using thin metal sheet or foil and those using springs as the reverberant medium. Both systems worked on the principle of exciting the chosen medium by a transducer at one end and picking up the resultant vibrations at the other end

with another transducer. Both systems have been very highly developed from these elementary principles and the top designs in each camp are very important as well as being rather costly. The lower price range has been dominated by spring systems which are cheaper to produce.

All these mechanical reverb systems suffered from common defects particularly in their susceptibility to external vibration and the way they would "take off" with percussive inputs.

Various developments have reduced these effects to a marked degree in the high priced units but let's look at what has been happening at the more reasonably priced end of the market where these problems were originally most pronounced.

Furman are a well known name in the US, manufacturing in San Rafael, California. Their range of products includes parametric equalizers

and electronic crossovers as well as the reverb unit under review here, the RV-1.

The RV-1 is a very compact design using only 1¾ inches of 19 inch rack space. The front panel is made from ½ inch aluminium finished in black with white legends and dark red knobs. The casing is anodised steel panels which is easily strong enough considering the total weight of the unit is under five pounds.

Access to the electronics is by removal of six screws in the top panel. The front to back depth is only 6½ inches excluding the knobs, with the bulk of the space being taken up by the spring system. This consists of three 16 inch springs in an Accutronics Type 9 triple-spring assembly. This assembly is floated at each corner from the chassis by a spring support. Each spring has a different initial delay time — 33, 37 and 41 mSec respectively with a following decay time of 1.8 s. The initial delay is the

time it takes for the spring to become excited and the different delays give a response nearer that of the complex random signal patterns of natural reverberation. Earlier models of the RV-1 only had two springs.

All the electronics are positioned on one PCB with all the components identified on the board. There are a couple of long wires that could benefit from being better secured to stop them flopping around but the general internal appearance is neat and tidy.

Controls

Starting from the left, the controls begin with the Input Level. This is not the overall input level but the input to the reverb section and so the input level to the spring transducer via a limiter. When the threshold of the limiter is reached and gain reduction begins the Limit Threshold green LED flashes. This is situated next to the Input Volume.

Next comes the equalisation section which schematically is situated on the signal return from the spring and so effects only the reverb signal. The Mid range is a parametric design with continuous adjustable frequency selection from 160Hz to 1400Hz coupled with the equalisation control offering + 18dB. The treble equalization control is a fixed turnover shelving design offering + 18dB on a curve beginning at 2.5kHz with maximum effect at 10kHz.

The remaining two knobs mix the output of the unit, balancing between the reverb and direct signals. To the right of the reverb a red LED illuminates when power is applied to the unit. There is no mains power switch.

The rear panel contains only three unbalanced jack sockets — line in, line out and a remote switching of the reverb in/out. The RV-1 is designed to operate at levels that require it to be used between a pre-amp and the power amplifier (musical instrument amplification) or on the echo send of a mixing console. Despite this, a guitar or similar input will drive it enough for some uses but the noise level is rather too high for any discerning applications. Of course, used in this way the limiter would not be operative as the input level would not reach the threshold level of the limiter.

There is provision on the electronics and in the manual to convert the unbalanced output to a balanced one if this is required. With the power removed there is no output even from the direct signal.

Use

With spring reverb units positioning is fairly important. I have already mentioned their susceptibility to external vibration and this obviously effects where they can be used. I found the RV-1 to be relatively immune to knocks and even a hard rap on the top of the cabinet, as long as it was firmly

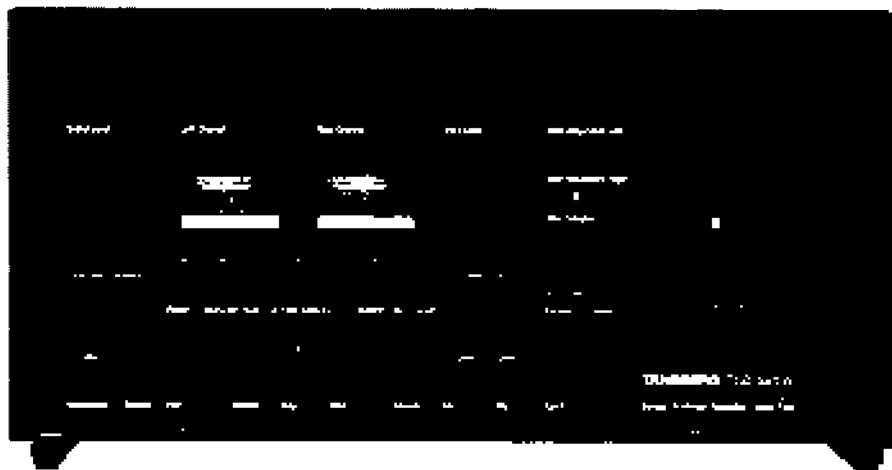
secured in a cabinet (the vibrational energy being absorbed by the spring assembly suspension). Vibration through the air and cabinets etc. is of course a problem, particularly at bass frequencies. High level monitoring in studio control rooms normally prevents mechanical reverb devices from being positioned actually in the control room (excepting

a couple of high priced models), The RV-1 is no exception to this rule although use of its equalisation section to find and cut any possible unwanted resonances will enable the RV-1 to be of more use in a noisy environment than most such units. The EQ can also be very effectively used to tailor the sound of the reverb, particularly in the mid range. For

example, a large cut at about 300Hz gives a rather "dry" reverb — more akin to the sound of a small live room. Other frequencies will give different effects.

When the RV-1 is used for mixing, the EQ can be used to filter out unnecessary reverb frequencies. For example, when a full frequency band is present in the mix, it is possible

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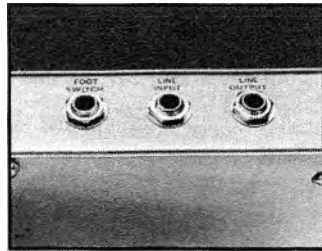
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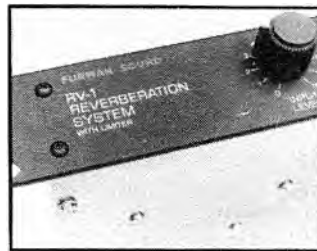
to filter out certain reverb frequencies that are masked by other signals and not heard. This will actually clear the sound, making it more distinct and reduce the level on the meters without lowering the perceived volume of the mix. This equalization would normally be applied at the send and return bus but a lot of the mixing consoles that this unit is likely to be used with probably would not have any spare facility for this.

I didn't find the treble equalization to be very effective on the material I used for testing. I feel that maybe a variable high pass filter on the input to the spring would be of more use to me, but it is surely a matter of choice.



The quality of the reverb sound is really good. The actual decay is very smooth and clean. I think that this is probably the best sounding spring line reverb I have heard at a reasonable price.

With the input crossing the limiter threshold periodically it is also surprisingly quiet. The only time I was a little disappointed with the response of the RV-1 was with the bass str-



ings of a standard electric guitar causing ringing in the spring although it only did this when the input level was high enough to flash the threshold LED. Lowering the level sent to the RV-1 removed this trouble.

Summary

The RV-1 is a really excellent little unit, well designed and effective in use. It does not equal

the performance of top line spring and plate reverbs costing over twenty times the amount, but it comes a lot closer than its price would indicate.

Keith Spencer-Allen



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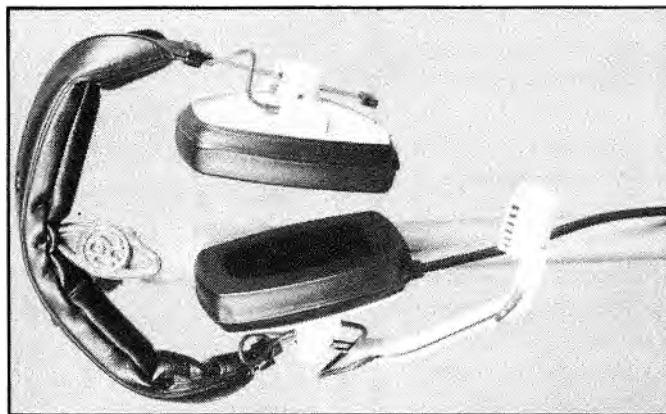
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Studio News

Cetronic Ltd. have announced a new range of rectilinear conductive plastic faders by MCB, known as the AT 104 and AT 2104. Both feature a travel of 104mm with the 2104 being a two channel version of the 104. The end of travel cut off is at -85dB with a claimed working life of over one million operations. A design feature is the spindle slot dust trap to protect the travel from the usual studio nasties of spilt drink and ash. Cetronic Ltd., Hoddesdon Road, Standstead Abbots, Ware, Herts. SG12 8EJ.



Beyer Dynamic have added a large number of new products to their already extensive range. Additions to the range of microphones are the MCE 5 (a sub-miniature electret condenser), M420N and M422N (hyper-cardioid dynamic special application mikes e.g. for voice in noisy surroundings such as control rooms for talkback) and the M130 (reintroduced double ribbon figure of eight dynamic). Also new are the long and short shotgun tubes for the Beyer Studio Microphone System which now completes this comprehensive range of condenser mikes and accessories.

Adding to the headphone range are three models for special applications — the DT 102 (one earpiece only to enable the wearer to hear acoustic cues as well as the headphones), the DT 108 (as the DT 102, but with a fitted microphone) and the DT 109 (a complete headset but with the same fitted microphone as the DT 108).

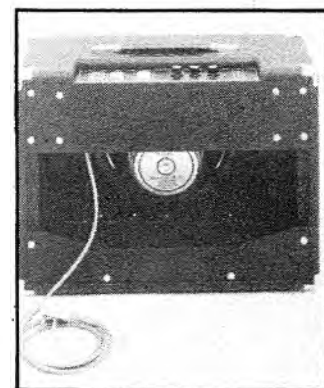
Brooke Siren Systems manufacture a number of audio components including the Contest AR 105 lead tester for XLR type and 1/4 inch jack connectors, the MCS 200 electronic crossover system that is fully modular and can be expanded to a maximum of a 5 way stereo system and the AR 116 active DI box.

Brooke Siren say that in the last three months they have sold over 250 for studio and live sound applications. As well as the normal jack socket inputs and XLR type output socket it features a phase reverse switch, earth lift, switchable low pass filter, switchable attenuator of 0, 20, 40dB to enable it to work from many differing inputs as well as a main/standby battery system or a phantom power unit to replace the main battery. Price of the basic AR 116 is £59 exci VAT.

Brooke Siren Systems, 92 Colney Hatch Lane, Muswell Hill, London N10.

New combo guitar amplifiers are introduced everyday but one that is a little different has been announced by Access Electronics Ltd., known as the Session 15:30. It has been designed for studio or demanding low power stage applications and it is an all valve design with the application of modern components and construction techniques.

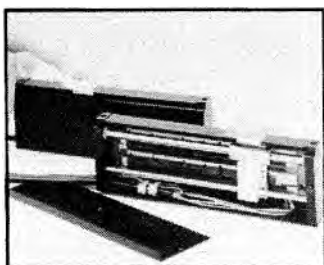
It has a choice of outputs of 15 or 30 watts and a choice of sensitivity as well as three band tone network and DI and monitored outputs which are designed so that they contain



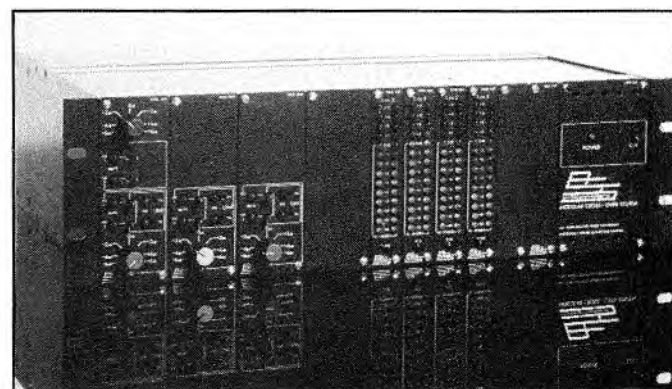
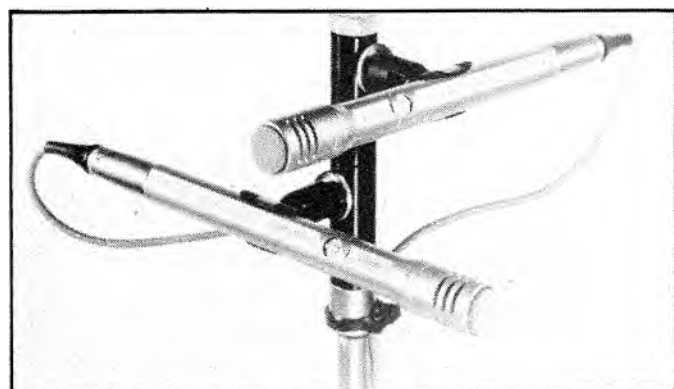
any distortion which is generated in the output stages. The speaker is a 65Watt Celestion and this is all mounted in a compact strong cabinet of 22 1/2 inches wide by 16 1/2 inches high and 12 inches deep.

Access Electronics Ltd., Viables Lane, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 4BU.

Keith Spencer-Allen



Shure Electronics have announced a stereo microphone adapter known as the A27M. It will enable two microphones to be mounted on a single microphone stand. One advantage is the wide variety of stereo techniques that may be used with the A27M including X-Y, ORTF and other configurations. The vertical separation of the microphones may be adjusted between 31.8mm, 66.7mm and 102mm. Its dimensions are 168mm long and 25.4mm in diameter with a weight of 392 grams. It will have a list price of £12.60 + VAT.



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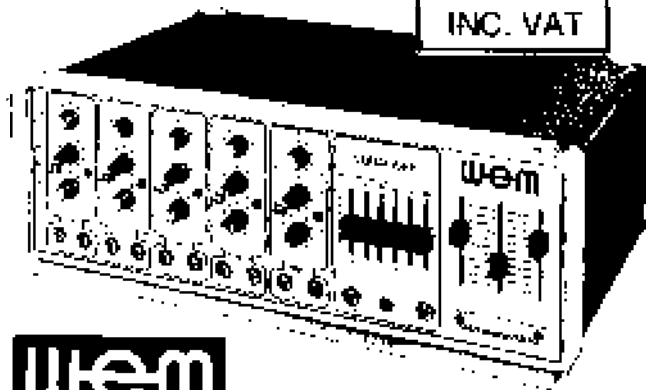
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Studio of the Month

R.G. Jones Wimbledon



When hearing the title R.G. Jones all sorts of corny allusions spring to mind such as "keeping up with the Joneses". Well if you are going to take that approach you will have your work cut out. This company was founded in would you believe 1926 when recording was at its most primitive. It was founded by R.G. Jones senior whose son Robin is now owner and managing director.

In the 1930s Jones Senior started to introduce sound into the theatre. He also did a lot of work in military and emergency PA. The theatre work started out with just sound effects and gradually they introduced the idea of using recording facilities. At this time the studio was a two-track facility situated in Morden, South London and they were working with artists such as Joe Loss and early dance bands and trios.

In the early Sixties the studio went four track — their first release being Alvin Roy's Jazz Band. In those days they worked with all sorts of now very

famous bands including the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, the Bee Gees, Elton John, David Bowie, Iggy Pop, Robin Gibb, Jimmy Page with Jeff Beck and the Who.

The next step was obviously to go eight track, and at this stage their work included an album for the Average White Band called *Show Your Hand*. 1974 saw the graduation to 16 track facilities. At this stage they were working on both demos and masters including some work for Alvin Stardust (*My Coochoo*)...

Finally in 1975, within 18 months of going 16 track they took the final step to their present status of 24 track. In 1977 the whole studio was completely gutted and redesigned making it very luxurious and in keeping with the quality equipment and recording available.

That's the history, now the facts. The studio area has a capacity for just over 30 musicians, i.e. it is quite large. Acoustics were designed by Sandy Brown Associated and incorporate a very wide range,

catering for everything from classical music right through to rock. At the rear is the live area where the carpet may be taken up revealing a parquet floor which is very nice for acoustic work such as string sections.

The screens are a special feature, being custom built. The average studio screen being quite thin and not that tall, this studio has gone one step further in every aspect and these screens are very tall and very solid with the usual absorbent and reflective sides. Because of their size, when they are put together in a line they form a good solid wall and therefore give excellent isolation and can be used to create very nice booths. They are especially effective for a good drum sound.

There are three isolation booths. Two of these are permanent fixtures built in and the third can be dismantled. It is therefore not quite as sound-proof as the others but nevertheless a very comfortable acoustic to work in. The drum booth is built on a floating floor, and the window may be

removed for the drummer who is not happy being cut off completely from the rest of the band. It has traps built into the ceiling and there are low frequency absorbers built into the lower half of the walls, thus the bass sound is very nice indeed. The third booth is used for vocals and acoustic work e.g. guitar, flute etc.

The ceiling above the live area also has a very large bass trap built in with the intention, once again, of enhancing such things as the string sound.

Atmospheric features include a large number of different coloured spotlights all over the studio so that different effects can be created, even so far as isolating one section of the room for those intimate affairs, if you know what I mean.

This room houses the resident Steinway grand piano (B model) which is tuned at least every other day at 5am — very nice. Apart from this there are no other "house" instruments available and this is quite rightly justified by their attitude that when you are working with

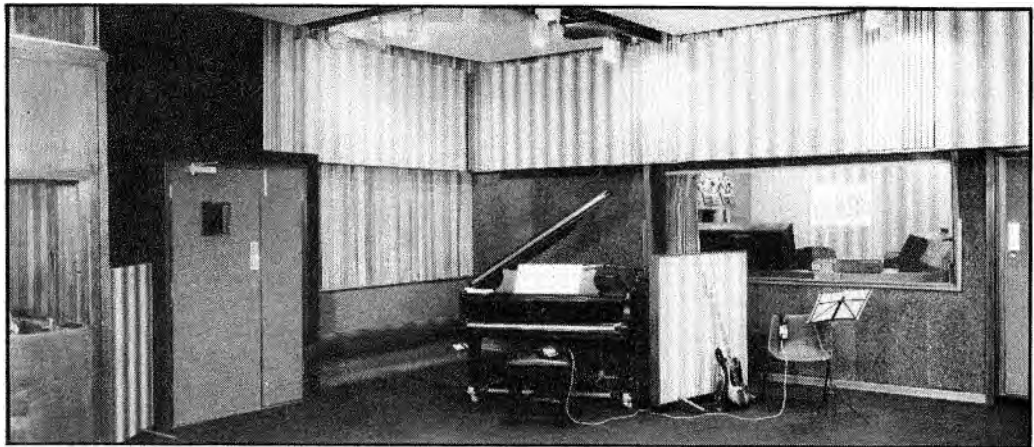
professional musicians of a high standard you are much more likely to meet their requirements of quality and choice by using reliable instrument hire people. Among those they use regularly are Julian's, Keyboard Hire and Percussion Services.

The studio has dealings with all the major record companies on a regular basis — CBS, Pye, RCA, EMI and Polydor to name but a few. Their recent work includes the following very well known artists — Barbara Dickson, Leo Sayer, Johnny Logan, Elkie Brooks and Cliff Richard whose "We Don't Talk Anymore" was done here.

I'm not sure why, but they consider themselves to be "at the bottom end of the top end of the market". That is to say, they don't work on any demos now — dealing with professional musicians all the time — but because they are situated out of central London their rates can be lower. So the only way I think they can be described as being bottom of the scale is if it is one of expense!

In the control room there is a Neve Custom 32/16/24 quadrophonic desk, featuring VU and PPM metering (to accommodate their film and TV work). It uses EMT and AKG echo. Effects include Autopans, Time Modulator, Space Station, Harmoniser, Phasing, Aphex Aural Exciter, Neve or Audio Design Limiter/Compressors, Kepex Noise Gates, Cooper Time Cube and Neve Stereo Width units. The monitors are JBL 4350s powered by Amcron amps and domestic monitoring is on the little ADS speakers.

The desk also has built in speakers which will illustrate what it will sound like on a transistor, although in this day and age of high technology domestic sound equipment I'm not sure that these are very relevant. Tape machines are 3M M79 16 and 24 tracks, two Studer A80s for mastering, two B62s, and they also have



three varispeed Revoxes. Noise reduction is Dolby A. The cassette deck is a Technics M85 which represents the importance Robin places on providing clients with high quality cassettes for home listening or playing to the record companies. Good point.

In the control room there is also one of the most important features — the staff, which consists of Chief Engineer Gerry Kitchingham, Engineer Martin Jones, and Tape Op. Rachael — although she has now reached the stage where she has started doing some

engineering of her own. Gerry has been with the company since he left school 13 years ago and has been engineering with them since the days when they were two track mono. Quite a track record. Ahem.

Entertainments include a beer garden and a pool table. When asked what they thought was the main attraction, they said that people appear to consider the studio to have a good atmosphere for working in. Local facilities are also very good with nice pubs and excellent restaurants of every type and price within easy distance of the studio.

One thing that Robin does want to put across is that they do work with artists in every field. Anybody with any type of music can be excellently catered for and are always made very welcome.

Rates are competitive at £36 (excl. VAT) per hour basic for 24-track and £32 (excl. VAT) for 16-track. The company also has its hand in other areas of the sound business, namely its own PA Hire, dealing with road equipment, TV work, trade shows and conferences. But that's another story.

Janet Angus

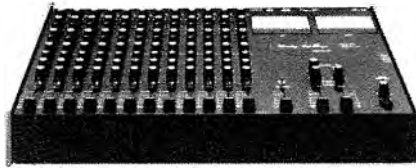
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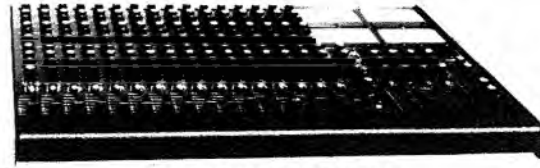
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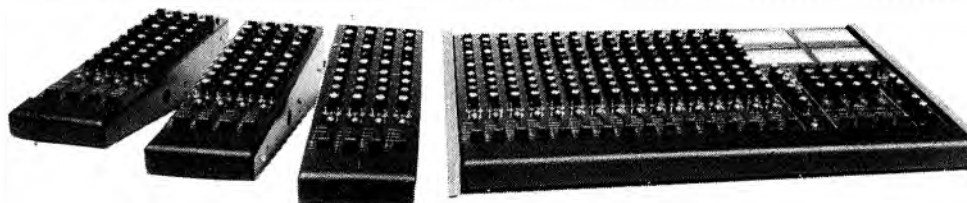
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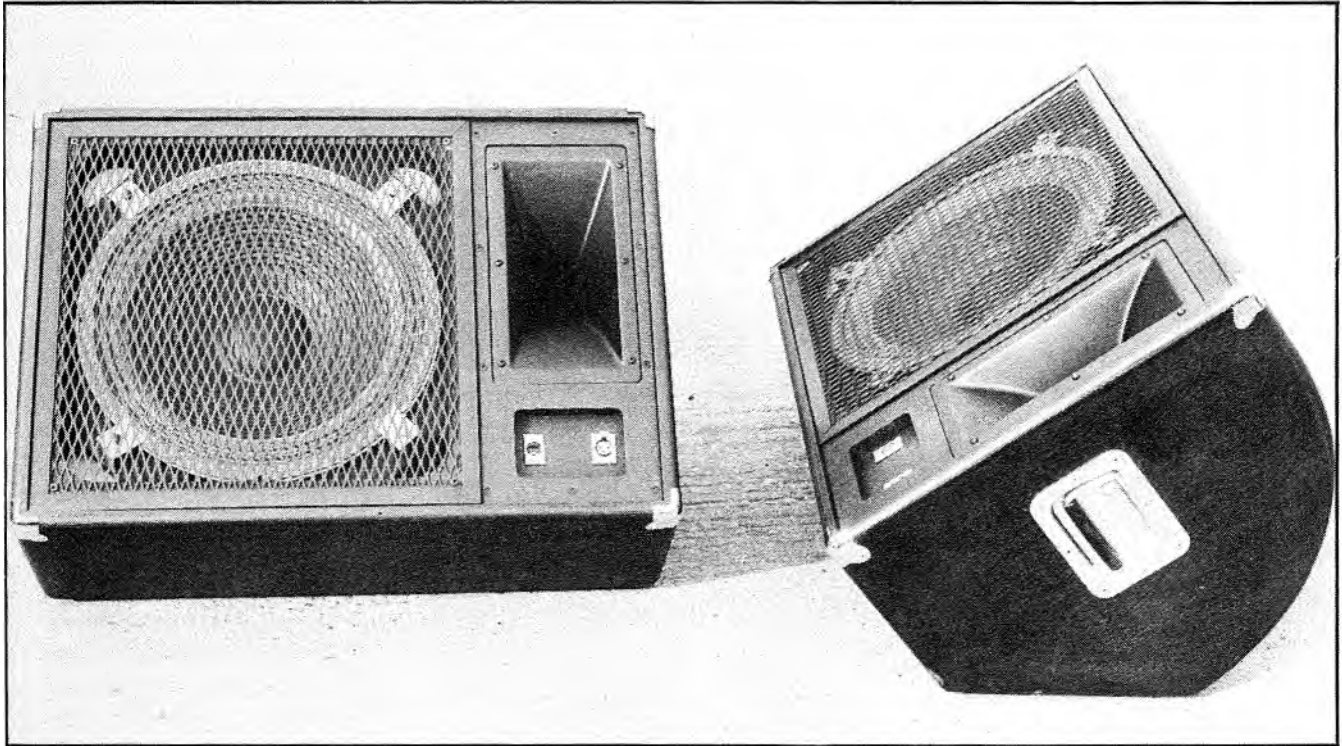
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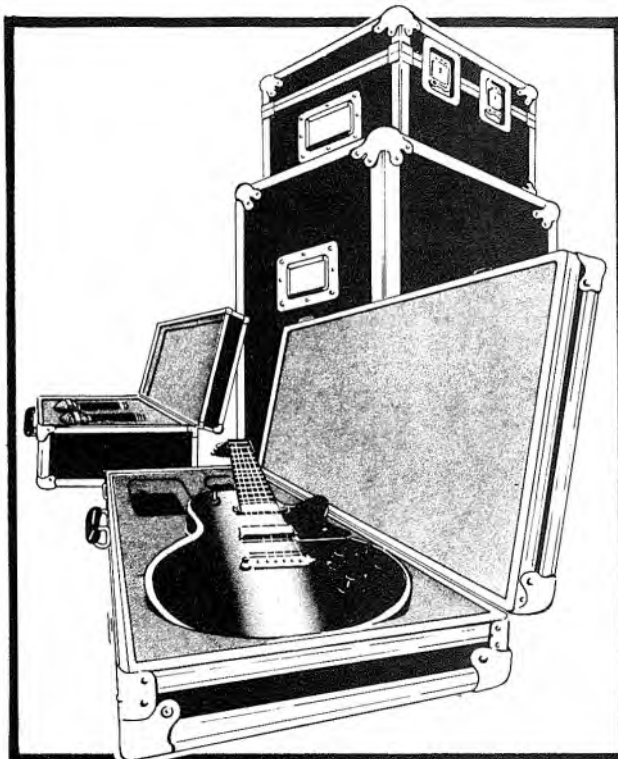
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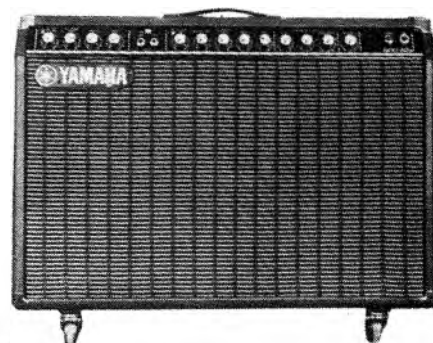
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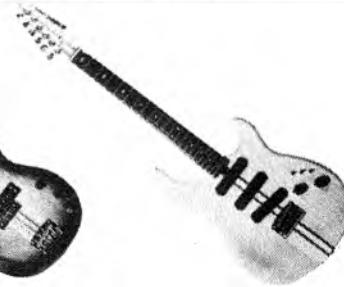
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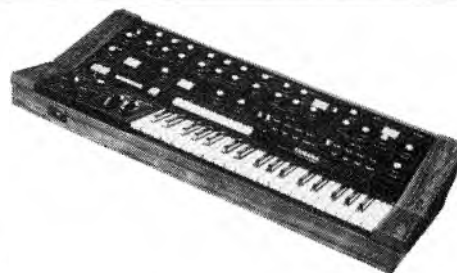
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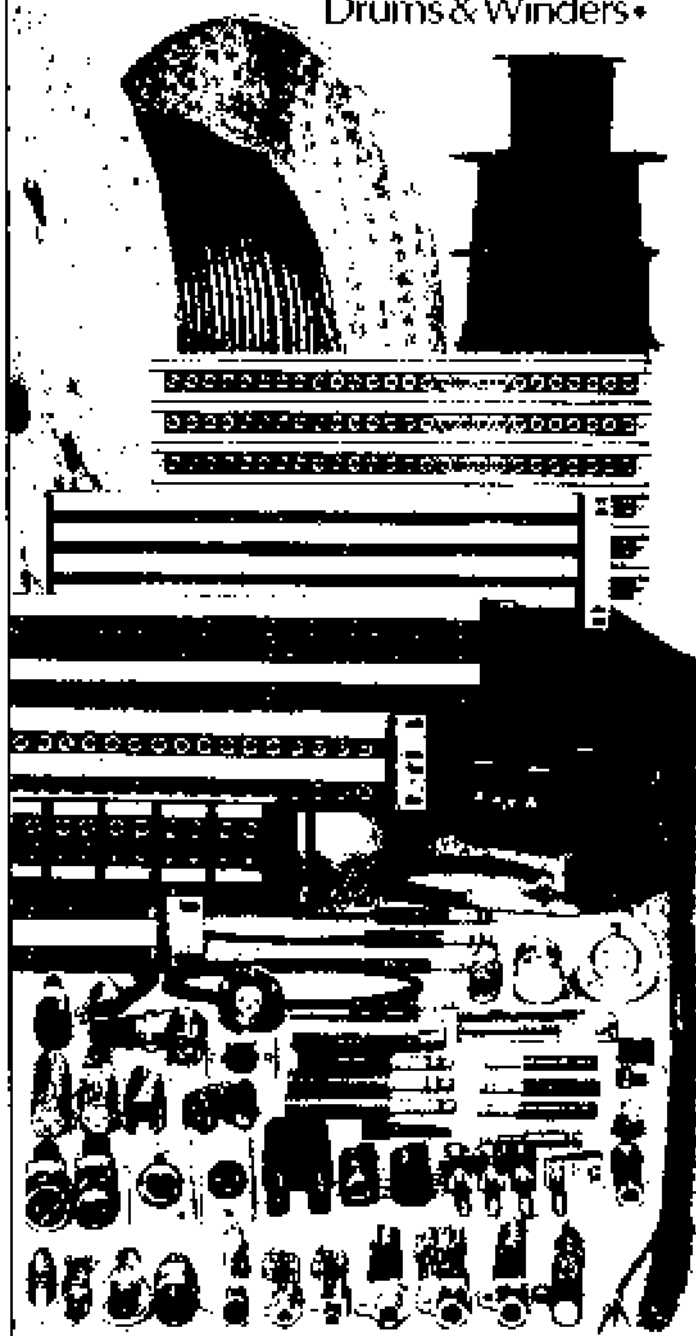
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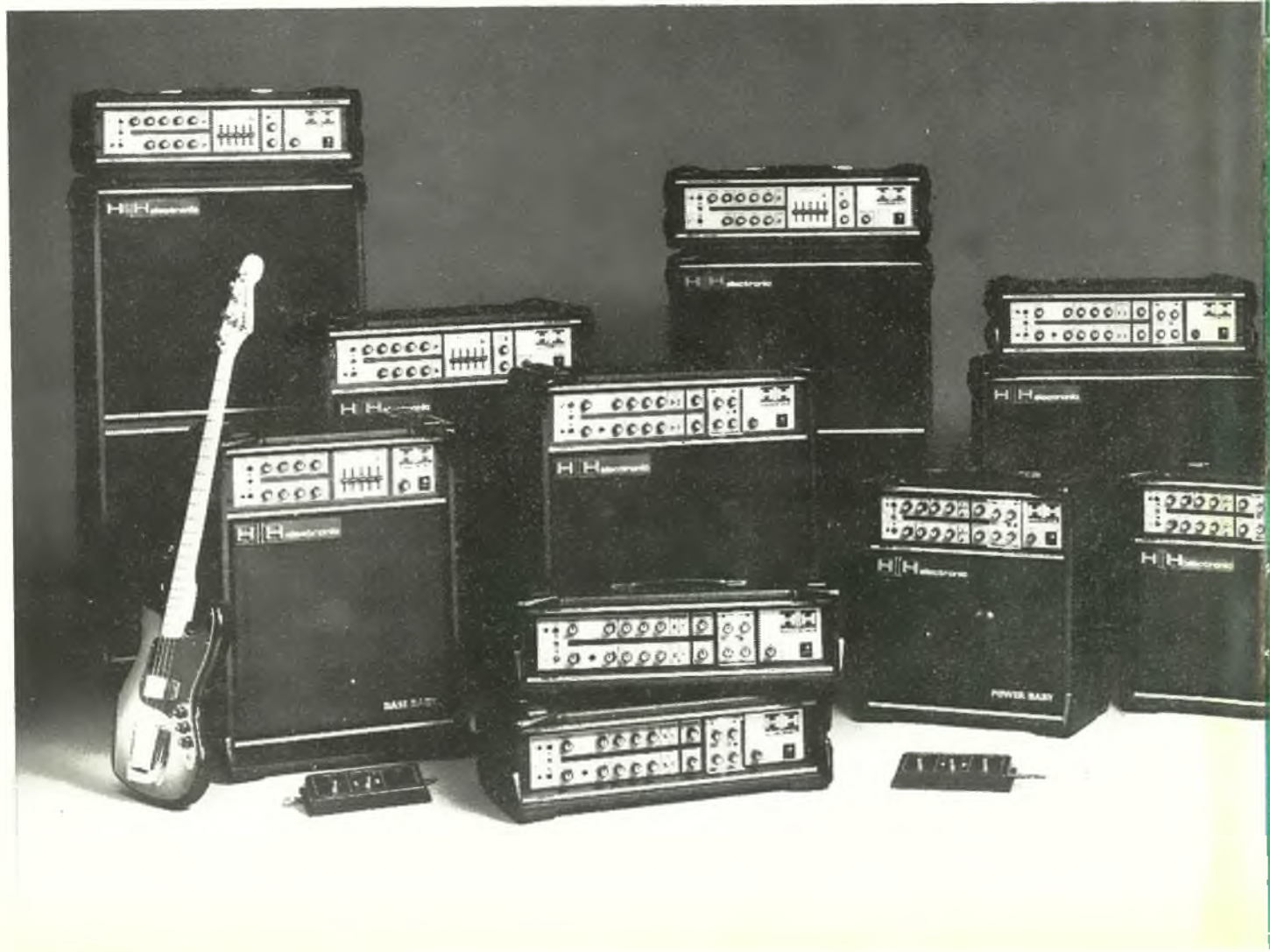
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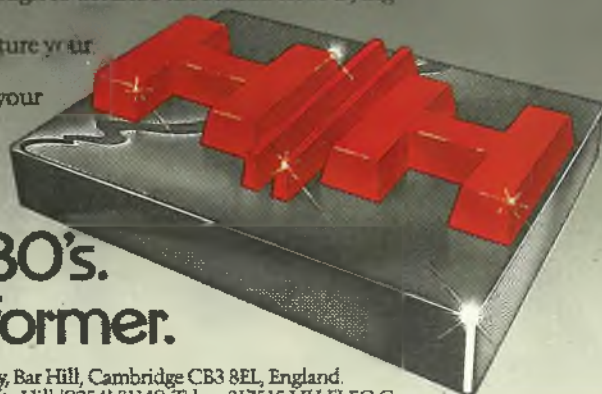
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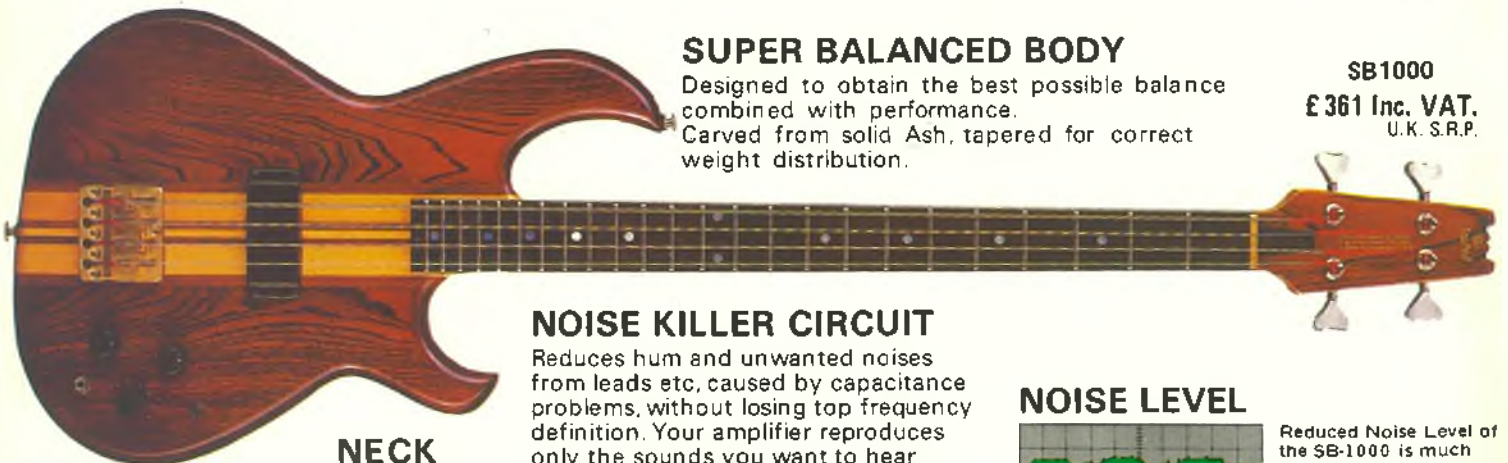
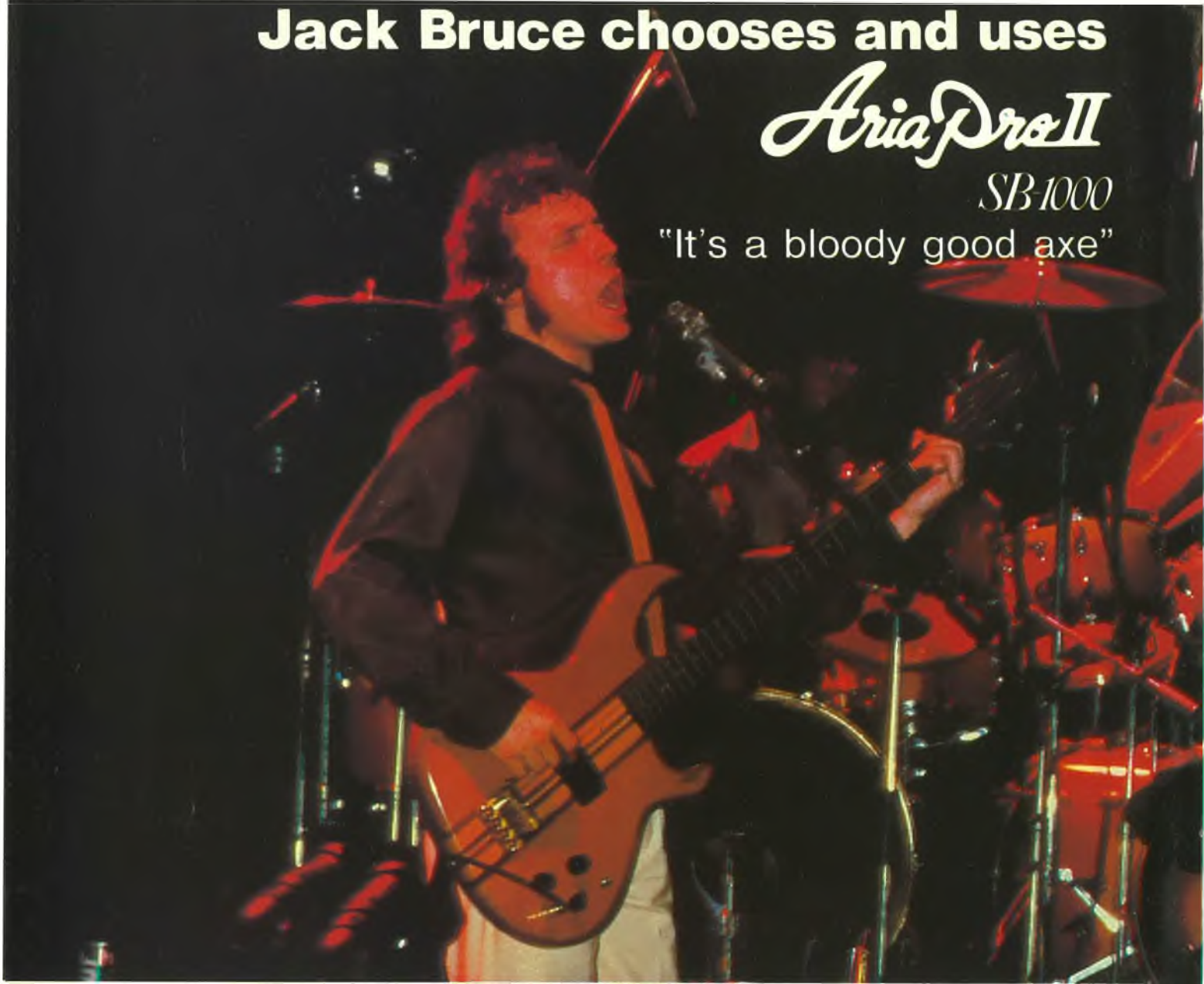
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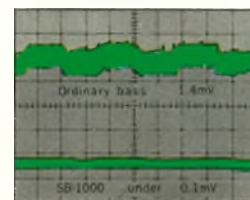
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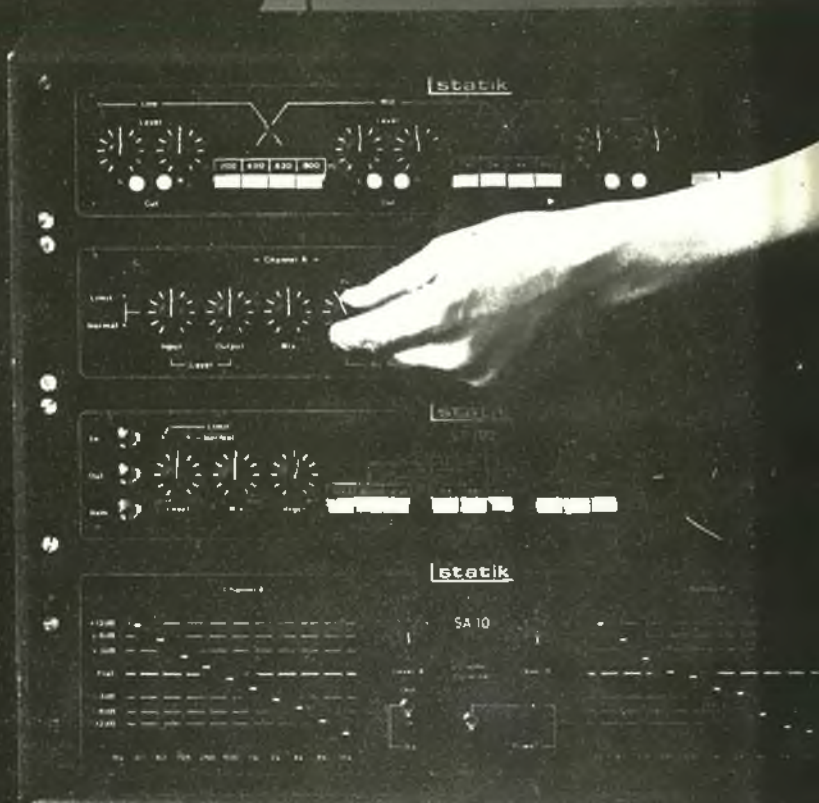
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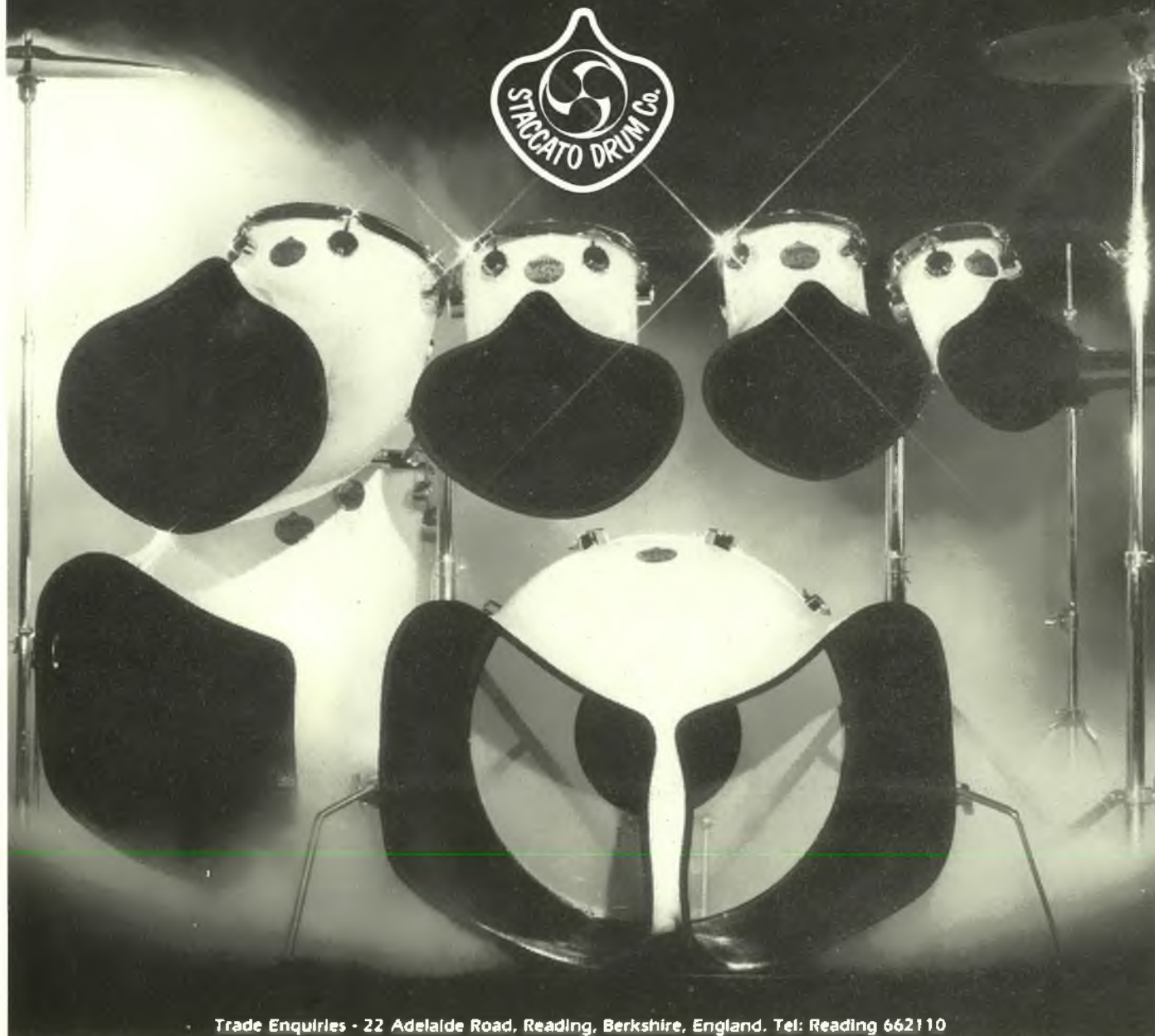
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DEALER OF THE MONTH

Rhythm House Stockport

The town of Stockport doesn't conjure up too much of a glamorous vision for most people. Although there may not be too many "dark satanic mills" around, being close to Manchester probably guarantees a fair amount of grey days.

Still the more enlightened among you will know that Stockport became a kind of "Muscle Shoals of the North" when 10cc set up Strawberry Studios there. And it's no surprise to find a thriving music shop not a stone's throw away.

Actually Rhythm House, situated in Middle Hillgate near the town centre, has been in business a lot longer than the studio — 25 years to be precise, although it's only really been a group shop for the last 10. It was in 1970 that Graham Stuart decided to give up gigging, but he wanted to stay in the music business.

He remembers walking past the old shop as they were having a closing down sale. He nipped in, bought the stock which was £2,000 worth of rubbish, and set about building it into a decent group shop. In those days the arrival of the early Gibsons and Fenders was something of an event, and securing agencies from manufacturers was far from easy.

As business slowly built up, Graham recruited some help. Tony Rowlinson used to rehearse in the room above the shop and helped behind the counter on Saturdays. When the shop manager left, Tony became full time.

Drums is often something of a problem for a music shop, and although Rhythm House always carried kits, it is very much a specialist subject. Drummer Paul Holland became the latest recruit and soon sorted the percussion side out. The shop's line up is completed by Alan Thompson, is a full time musician who helps out when things get busy.

Having got the shop and the staff sorted out, the next big question was, "could the area support a music shop?" Tony answered, "There are always good times and bad times, but the music scene up here is strong. There seems to be a lot



of places where bands can play. The big spenders seem to be the cabaret bands because there is good money in that."

Alan added, "We're very lucky here because we've not only got club venues, but also a lot of pubs who put on live music. There's work for everybody as long as they're good."

Having Strawberry Studios close by is also good for business and helps spread the good name of the shop. Rhythm House don't do a hire service as such, but they do provide equipment for the studio. Often the bands appreciate the service and come back to buy gear.

The layout of the shop is excellent. Being on a corner they make full use of their extensive window space, and inside the shop is packed with gear but not cluttered. At one time all the gear, including drums, occupied the floor space, but now several upstairs rooms

have been made into specialist areas.

There is a drum room, of which Paul is naturally very proud, and a room for all the secondhand gear. There is also plans for a special "left handed" room, which would contain, naturally enough, all left handed instruments. This is a great idea considering the trials and tribulations that most left handed players have to go through to get an instrument. Incidentally, the stairs and walls of these rooms are crammed with guitars of all shapes and sizes from excellent copies to obscure collectors items like Vox and Burns.

As you may have gathered they stock all the top makes of instruments and equipment particularly Premier and Maxwin on the drum side, Fender and Gibson guitars, and HH, Marshall, Carlsbro and Laney sound equipment.

Service is something they pride themselves on, Paul car-

ries extensive drum accessories, repairs are available and they will often provide you with something to tide you over a gig while your gear is being fixed. The shop will also cater for the customers who are torn between two pieces of gear. Providing you are going to buy one or the other, they will let you take it out to a gig and change it if it doesn't suit.

Rhythm House also do a lot of second hand business and regard part exchange as an important part of their trade. Tony sums up the attitude of the shop by saying, "People aren't under any commitment once they walk in — we'll talk for hours to a customer because we are interested."

So there you have it, the kind of shop that is well worth a look around if you want some interesting gear at a good price.

Oh by the way Happy Anniversary lads!

DIBBLE'S P.A. COLUMN

GENESIS

Venue: Coventry Theatre

Hire Company: HHB, London

The equipment set up as used by Genesis is probably among the most complicated of any touring band and in order to provide a reasonably detailed account of how the very individual Genesis sound is produced, we shall devote the whole of this month's PA Column to this one concert.

Whatever else may have been written in the music press recently about the current activity on the Genesis front in respect of their current album *Duke* or the current tour, I consider that this was just about the best concert I have ever seen from any band and not being into the airy-fairy, slick catchphrase, smartass form of journalism that we all too often find in the music press, I shall simply say so in plain English.

The sound was good, the band were superb and the lighting, which incidently was provided by Lairhurst (formerly Rainbow Lighting) was fantastic. On this tour, the three original members of the band, Mike Rutherford, Tony Banks and Phil Collins, were joined by Chester Thompson who bore the brunt of the drumming so that Phil Collins was free to concentrate on the vocals, and Daryl Stuermer from the States to help out Mike Rutherford on guitars.

The stage was literally littered with instruments and equipment, with the particular set of equipment for each member of the band arranged to enclose a small area of the stage in which each musician played and generally did his thing. The general arrangement of these bays was to have the loudspeaker cabinets associated with the instrument across the back, the floor monitor cabinet and foot pedals across the front, and amplifiers, effects units, mixers, keyboards etc. down the sides. Instead of having a permanent bass guitarist, the bass was provided by Mike Rutherford, Daryl Stuermer or Tony Banks using either bass guitar, Moog Taurus bass pedals or by the bass sections of a Hammond C3 organ or synthesizers as happened to be

convenient for each number, thereby giving the band greater flexibility and scope than the constraints imposed when one member is permanently committed to playing bass only.

Daryl Stuermer played an assortment of guitars which included Shergold and Gibson basses, Ibanez and Suntec electrics and Alvarez and Ovation acoustics. The basses were played through two Sunn Coliseum bass amp heads and two Sunn 4 x 12 cabinets while the six string electrics were put through a Yamaha G100-112 combo — fitted with a JBL K120 speaker drive unit, via a multitude of effects units including an MXR digital delay line, Boss Chorus Ensemble, various Roland gadgets, etc.

The Sunn bass amps were directly injected into the PA while the Yamaha combo was miked using a Shure SM57. A Moog Taurus bass pedal completed the set-up. The selection of guitars used by Mike Rutherford was much the same as those used by Daryl except that the odd Fender appeared occasionally along with a 12-string acoustic. These were supplemented by a Roland guitar synthesizer and an ARP Avatar synthesizer. I could not determine exactly how this lot was amplified and fed to the PA, but it looked as though the basses were fed through an Ashley guitar pre-amplifier unit to an Amcron PSA-2 power amplifier feeding a pair of custom built speaker cabinets, each containing an ATC 12-inch long coil bass unit and a JBL 2105 five inch unit for the upper mids — and what an incredible bass sound he got with this set-up!

The six string guitars seemed to be fed through a Peavey Mace valve amp head, but this was apparently only being used as pre-amp to drive an Amcron DC-300A feeding a pair of Sunn 4 x 12 cabinets. Somewhere into that little lot fitted a Yamaha PM700 12 into two mixing console and a whole jungle of foot-pedal effects units including several small MXR graphics, an MXR flanger, a variety of Roland



Phil Collins.

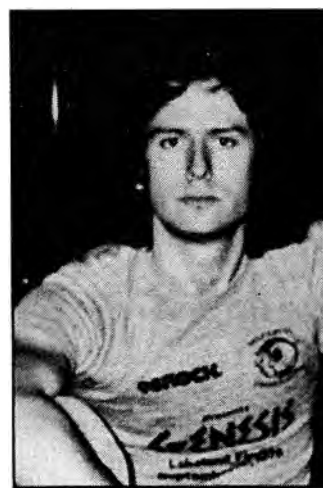


Mike Rutherford.

volume pedals etc all screwed down and permanently wired on a large base board. Which pedal was used with what instrument, or what combination is anybody's guess and I certainly had no time to root through and make any kind of sense of it all! Another Moog Taurus bass pedal provided the finishing touch to Mike's amazing den of goodies.

Moving on now to Tony Banks' keyboards set-up, this included a Yamaha CP70 electric grand piano — obligatory in any professional keyboard line-up these days it would seem, a Hammond C3 organ, a Prophet V string synthesizer, ARP Quadra and ARP 2600 synthesizers and a Roland Vocoder all feeding an Amek M-1000 series 12/2 mixer which in turn fed an Amcron DC-300A and two-wedge monitor loudspeakers. Also included were a multitude of effects units including an MXR stereo flanger, a Boss Chorus Ensemble, an MXR DDL etc., etc.

Another amazing den of equipment personalised by Tony Banks' exact requirements — but of course, a large proportion of the individuality of the Genesis



Tony Banks.

sound is due to Tony's keyboards playing so one should expect to find great attention to detail in this department. Even Phil Collins' front microphone position did not escape the onslaught of electronic gadgetry, as beside his Christmas tree of Premier tambourines was yet another of these Moog Taurus bass pedal units and a Roland CR28 Compurhythm synthesizer. Phil's drum kit was mainly Premier, with Ludwig Speedking pedal and snare drum, Slingerland

hi-hat pedal and Paiste and Zildjian cymbals. Chester Thompson's kit comprised a greatly extended Pearl Concert kit, again with Paiste and Zildjian cymbals and a comprehensive set of Syndrums.

The stage monitor system was highly sophisticated and had been specially designed by HHB for the Genesis tour. Each individual "den" had a small 10-channel mono mixer included with the equipment. Sometimes this was incorporated into another mixing console serving other purposes, and sometimes it was a separate item. The output of each of these mixers was fed to the floor monitor cabinets in each individual den via an Amcron PSA-2 power amplifier and 27-band graphic equaliser. Each floor monitor was fitted with two ATC PA75-314 12-inch drivers and a JBL horn assembly.

The 10 input channels to these individual monitor mixers were fed in parallel from 10 of the output channels of a Total Audio Concepts 24 into 12 main monitor console. By this arrangement, any 24 channels as selected at a master patchbay are equalised and mixed down into 10 groups by the monitor engineer at the main monitor console with the final mix being achieved by each member of the band individually, in his own den, to his own personal requirements, using the small 10-channel mixers. Even the two drum kits and Phil Collins' vocal position are equipped with these little mixers.

It is a most ingenious and highly complicated system, with all the mixers interlinked by a multiway cable system running right around the stage. The system is further complicated by the fact that both drum kits are equipped with more sophisticated loudspeaker systems requiring three-way active crossover and that the crossover units for these, along with all five graphic equalisers, are required to be located at the main monitor desk position and not at the location of the final mix-

ers in each den. This means that output sends and returns between each individual mixer, its associated graphic and/or crossover unit as appropriate and the power amplifier(s) are all carried in the multiway in addition to the 10 mixed-down input signals! The remaining two output groups of the TAC 24/12 main monitor console are used to feed side fills and monitors at the desk position itself. It really is quite a system and seemed to work very well indeed, with HHB's Noel Mawer in what is probably the most demanding technical role of the whole show — monitor engineer.

Phil Collins' vocal microphones were Shure SM57's, while Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks used Beyer M88's. HHB are very much into these M88's for lead vocals and they certainly gave me a convincing demonstration by an A-B comparison between my own favourite — the Shure SM58 and the Beyer in their warehouse recently. Identical microphone types were used for the two drum kits, and these comprised the Electro-Voice RE20 on the kick drums, Shure SM57's on tom-toms and snares and AKG C451 capacitors on cymbals. A particularly appropriate selection in my own opinion and one which certainly produced a very exciting drum sound with plenty of attack and guts. It seems that almost everything else was DI'ed — including the acoustic guitars which, as far as I could ascertain, were all fitted with pickups rather than being miked.

The main PA mixing console was a very large Amek M-1000 series desk in 48 into 8 into 2 format, although it was built in two actual consoles — a complete 32/8/2 main desk and a separate 16-channel extender console which fully linked up to the main desk on all busses. The desk has four auxiliary circuits to which were connected one of the new Eventide Clockworks H949 Harmonizers, a Dynacord DRS-78 digital reverberation system, a Bell BF20 stereo flanger and an

Audio & Design F760X Compex-Limiter. Three DBX 160 limiters were also available for patching into the desk as and where required and one of the incredible new Nakamichi 680 cassette decks provided in-fill music.

Crossover was three-way active using specially modified Pro-Audio PA23 crossover/limiter units and room equalisation was by a pair of Pro-Audio PA27 third octave graphics. All the power amplifiers were Amcron — which is hardly surprising since HHB now hold the exclusive UK franchise for Amcron, and most of these were the brand new PSA-2 models which have a rated power output in the order of 1,200 watts each. A few of the more familiar DC-300A's were also to be found here and there.

The main loudspeaker system was completely covered with black drapes and consisted of a pile of four JBL 4550 2 x 15 flared bins fitted with JBL 2220A drive units for bass, alongside which was a vertical stack of seven 2 x 12 direct radiator midrange cabinets, four JBL 2350 horns, one 2355 horn and two 2390 acoustic lenses all fitted with JBL 2441 compression drivers for the upper mids and four JBL 2402 fed from passive crossovers for the highs.

This stack was repeated on each side of the stage and in fact employed only half of the gear being carried due to the fact that Coventry Theatre is a comparatively small venue seating just over 2,000. Even so, the loudspeaker stacks occupied about half of the available stage width. The sound engineer was Craig Schertz of Showco, who, as Genesis' permanent sound engineer, had come over from the States for the UK part of the tour.

One or two other items of interest are that the main PA desk and all the associated auxiliary equipment is powered from an ingenious motorised variac which automatically regulates the mains power supply and has a

particularly fast correction time. The other unusual feature is that upon arrival at a venue, one of the first operations is to set up a full instruments-come-electronics workshop backstage and for this purpose, Genesis carry with them a full set of electronic test equipment and rack upon rack of drawers of spare parts.

This Technical Room, as it is termed, is staffed by a full-time, fully trained electronics engineer, Geoff Callingham, and it is reckoned that there is very little of the equipment that cannot be fully serviced and/or repaired on the spot. While the rest of the crew are getting the equipment set up on stage, and if there are no repairs to do, Geoff is usually busy making up leads, or designing and building some new piece of electronic gadgetry to add to the already terrifyingly extensive array of equipment used by the band.

Genesis' sound was good and the whole show is a masterpiece of technical production and co-ordination between the musicians on stage, their personal roadies and the sound and lighting engineers. I have however heard better overall sound quality, with more clarity and far better definition — especially at low frequencies, but handling far less complicated music and without the technical complexities of the Genesis stage set-up.

Contrary to popular belief, Genesis were not that loud, with average programme sound pressure levels sitting between 96dB(A) and 100dB(A) and peaking at not much more than 104dB(A) — although in my own opinion, this was quite loud enough and allowed the concert to be enjoyed without a ringing sensation in the ears or a temporary threshold shift being suffered afterwards. As I said in the introductory paragraph, I thoroughly enjoyed the whole concert and I really do not think that the audience would have any criticism to make at all.

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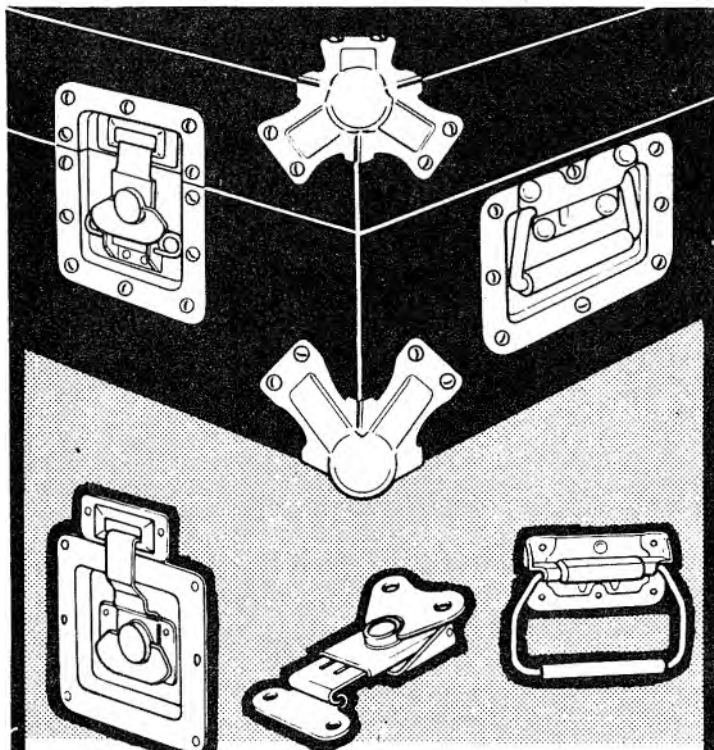
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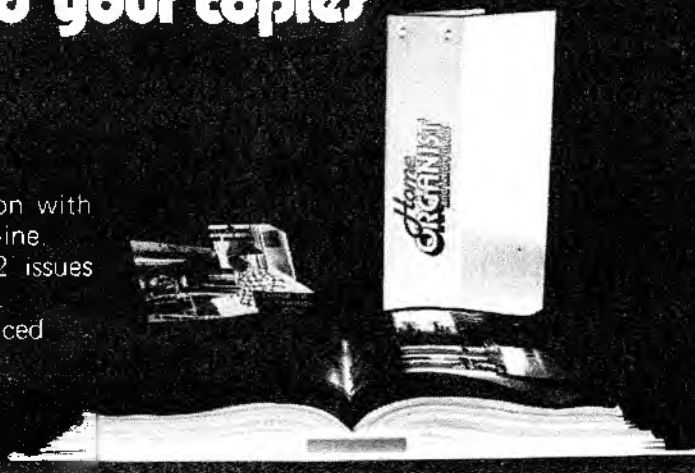
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FREEDMAN'S

The East End Connection

For many musos over the years, the area of Leytonstone on the border of London's East End and Essex has been synonymous with the name of Freedmans. It is the kind of music shop which, for so long has become so much a part of the local social scene as well as the music one.

As with all businesses, music shops are hit by the ups and downs of the economy, so it's reassuring to find one well established store you can rely on to provide the necessary services year in and year out.

Such a shop is Freedmans, and they have built up an enviable reputation which stretches far beyond the confines of London and the South East, although they weren't always so well known.

The story begins a long time ago with a couple of blokes selling accordions from a stall in Petticoat Lane. To prove just how good the merchandise was, they used to play the squeezeboxes to the would-be buyers.

The two stall holders were George Deutz and Alf Freedman, and they started a business which grew and grew until today it occupies something like 4,000 square feet of selling space on a prime sight in the High Road at Leytonstone. The company is still known as Freedmans and the boss of the organisation is the son of George Deutz, Derek.

The original shop was much smaller than the present day one, and situated further down the road. It continued to put its faith in accordions, but pretty soon, plucked strings ousted blown reeds as the most popular instrument and George and Alf realised that they could no longer depend solely on accordions.

Within five years the shop was catering for all musical instruments and as the Sixties approached, so did electronics. The Sixties were a boom time for musical instruments and it wasn't long before new premises had to be found.

Despite the growth in business the move still produced some anxiety and Derek remembers thinking that they would have to spread the stock pretty widely so there wouldn't be too many empty spaces!

The premises themselves consist of two adjoining shops which have been interconnected by the simple process of knocking a hole through the intervening wall, which nevertheless is an artistically pleasing hole.

This gave them about 3,500 square feet of space which soon filled up with organs and brass as well as the burgeoning guitar and sound equipment products of the rock scene. While there is still room for a shelf displaying accordions, it is the rows of guitars and amplifiers which dominate the showrooms these days.

Steve Thomson is the man in charge of the group gear side and he pursues a policy of stocking top quality instruments which give value for money. On the guitar side these include Ibanez, Kramer, Wal, Washburn and Guild. For amplification you need not look anywhere else because it's all here. The new Performer range from HH takes pride of place alongside Laney, Marshall, Intermusic and a host of others.

Freedmans stock a wide range of percussion which features kits by Premier, Rogers, Tama, Pearl and Maxwin, in addition to a comprehensive range of congas, Latin percussion and marching band gear. Synthesised drums and a large variety of spares mean that the store is somewhat of a drummer's delight.

With such a large shop, it means that everything is well laid out and easy for the customer to see and try. Drum kits are set out and there is a special soundproofed room where amps and synths can be played without disturbing anyone else.

Service is the watchword for Steve and his staff, which is why their clients range from the top bands like Wings to the youngster buying his first instrument. Customers come from afar afield as Manchester and Europe, the latter obviously benefitting from the easy access to the cross channel ports of Harwich and Dover.

Because they are long established, Freedmans have their customers returning time and time again. They are on such good terms with manufacturers and distributors that if they haven't got a certain item, then it can usually be sought out in no time. Good competitive prices are another attraction for customers.

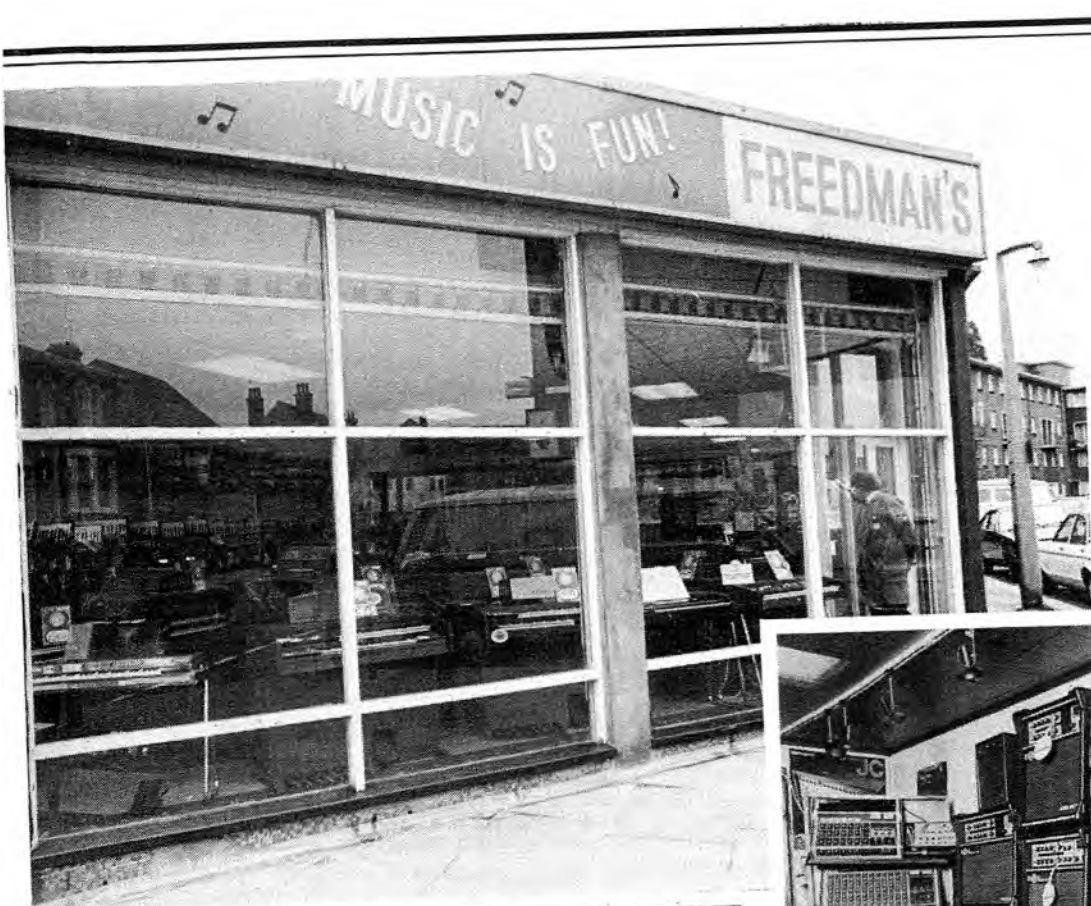
It is also worth noting that they also run one of the Yamaha Music Schools which sees about 100 pupils a week coming for lessons on the organ. The shop incidentally carries a full range of beginners and educational instruments plus items such as ukeleles and mandolines. There are also a couple of repair workshops on the premises, and a small manufacturing and customising service is included.

In addition to Steve on the group gear side, there is Chas Hodges who specialises in drums, and Mad Mac who lurks around the drum cellar. All have experience as gigging musicians.

Because of the way the business has been built up, it seems that a store like Freedmans will continue to prosper. They are far removed from the fly-by-night operators, who might not be there when you want to take back the amp which has blown up a week after its purchase.

Freedmans can't afford not to care about their customers or else they would have gone out of business a long time ago. The fact that the business has actually grown over a long period of time speaks for itself.





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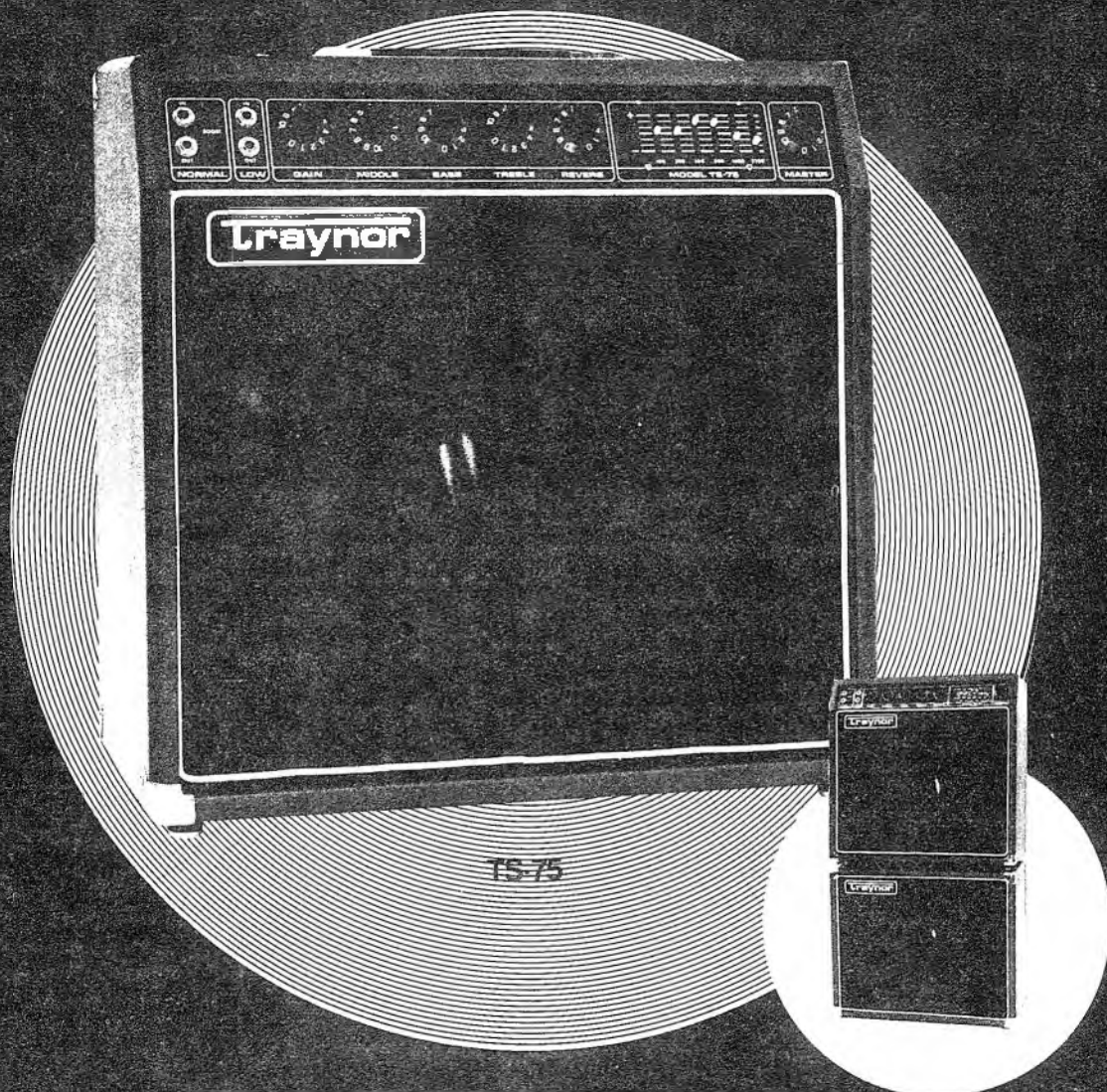


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HI FI FOR MUSOS

Three Systems For Reference

It is much trickier putting together a system for general consumption than it is to set up a pecking order for a given component category according to given parameters. The constants involved rarely allow unequivocal recommendations.

One individual's opinion must ultimately differ from another's even if this is merely a matter of degree and the same applies to the elements introduced by the listening room concerned in which any evaluation takes place. The higher up the hi fi tree we progress the finer the lines of differentiation we need to draw as it is only in these finer virtues that any justification is found for the increased cost.

Out of the range of better designed products at each level of cost our three systems are ultimately only a point of reference for the sake of the argument. Within each individual system examination, alternative choices are therefore given.

Choosing for keeps

It is only the hi fi buff pursuing a hobby, who needs to upgrade his equipment because better gear arrives on the market. A first priority when putting together a system is that the basic lineup should be chosen to provide many years of service; this is synonymous with value for money. It is therefore often wiser to drop one component when budgets are tight in order to gain higher overall results. This is where hi fi separates allow you room to move; to accommodate your growing requirements.

Juggling your budget allocations accordingly calls for an awareness of your personal needs and of future technological possibilities. According to these you may be able to decide which component to skimp on, and those you ought to put an emphasis on if your ultimate means are beyond your present means. In a system with a full component of sources — disc, tape and radio — it is rarely wise to drop below a figure of £400, for example.

Over the past few years



amplifier and speaker technologies have advanced by leaps and bounds. It is, for example, therefore possible in a mid or top-budget system to buy the superb little NAD 3020; gambling on an even higher level of performance later on at an effectively lower cost.

Cassette performance has seen a similarly inspiring rate of advance over the past three to five years. Two specific innovations — metal tape formulations, currently at too high a premium to catch the biggest market, and Dolby HX processing — each promise high gains which ultimately should percolate down to lower grades in the hi fi order. You might thus make your savings on the cassette component when costs are tight.

Unless your tastes include the straight music programming the BBC puts together so excellently, there is not a lot of real value in a tuner. A tuner is not worth a lot of fuss unless you record live rock concerts off the air or decide to aim for long distance reception with an ambitious aerial array on your roof. Live recordings can become precious in the longer term.

Going cheap on your disc player should not incur the penalty of actual harm done to your discs — these become quite precious when replacements are no longer available. The advent of the video disc plus the possible, though later, impact of digital sound chains over the next five

to 10 years begs the argument that you ought, maybe to make today's turntable purchase your last — you are, after all, hardly likely to shed your hard-won repertoire of analogue LP discs simply because the storage media has changed.

And there, in a nutshell, we have it. In the classic manner of hi fi writing the recommendations manage to avoid coming down on one side of the fence or another and you are still left with the good or bitter experience of using your own judgements. What better homage could be paid to your individual ability to choose wisely?

Low budget system £400-£500

Signal sources: 1. Ortofon FF15e magnetic pickup cartridge. £24. Picked out of a roster of quality budget devices including the ADC QLM 34 III, Signet TK 3E, Pickering XV15/625e and Stanton 500EE, the FF15e works with medium-mass arms and has an elliptical stylus tip of reasonable quality and comes fitted with a flat equaliser which usually ensures that the frequency response is kept even with the right amount of loading capacitance; recommended by the marker's at around 400 pF.

2. Sansui SR222 Mk.2. integrated manual record deck. £60. Picked out of a competi-

tion counting the Dual CS606, Bang & Olufsen Beogram 1500, Philips AF677 and Pioneer PL512 the 222 II is simple, well engineered and very attractive in appearance. For a budget deck the pickup arm is particularly commendable, with a fair balance of merits both in engineering and adjustment senses. The par-for-the-course rubberised feet fitted, mean a quite solid surface is required for the deck to stand on if it is not to pickup vibrations which colour the sound; at worst generating some feedback.

3. The Hitachi D33S is a metal-capable cassette deck which provides for reasonable recording accuracy with a peak light. The meters on all but the best of decks above £150 or so rarely respond fast enough for accurate levels to be set. A flash, on programme peaks, is all you need, really, to make sure you fully exploit the tape without distortion. The power-assisted controls have a nice feel, allow the direct transfer between transport modes.

Noise on the electronic circuits is commendably low if you leave the DIN inputs alone though the microphone input needs a fair amount of gain to get them working. The D33S has something of an edge in its league against the likes of the JVC KD A2 and KD10, the Rotel RD 300, Aiwa AD M200 and TEAC CX210, which all come close for value.

The amplifier chosen to fill the centre spot is the NAD



3030 (£90); a 20 watt per channel integrated unit with a fine sound and an excellent standard of engineering. The 3020 features what the maker's describe as a "soft clipping" circuit which prevents the amplifier sounding rough on high modulation peaks at high gain — and it works.

At the speaker end a pair of **KEF Celeste III** have been chosen. Designed for open stand mounting, the Celeste III is a two-driver system finished with a black wrap-around fabric which looks quite good against the black of the amp and turntable. Like the amplifier the speaker could easily find a place in a system of higher quality. In this league however a purchaser might also look at the Wharfedale Laser 200, Castle Acoustics Richmond 2, Celestion UL6 and Ditton 22, KLH 317 and Bowers & Wilkins DM11 if the aim is to find a pair of low-ish to low colouration speakers of reasonable efficiency which will cope with rock music.

All together now!

Smooth is probably the best description for this remarkably cost-effective lineup of components. The clean presentation of the amplifier fed via a basically quite neutral cartridge works well with the relatively dull presence of the loudspeakers to create an "untiring" sound, free of any objectionable stridency. The amplifier, despite its 20 watt rating will provide very high levels of sound which the speakers accept without demur. The stereo imaging, whether from disc or tape, was maintained.

It was nice to see good control over high rise transients without the sibilant compression effects usually experienced at this sort of price. Colouration in the midband was really to be expected; this was largely the fault of the speakers though again not unacceptably so. Changing the speakers for the Lentek S4 from our mid-budget system and later the turntable for the Thorens TD160S/SME3009 made an appreciable difference. At the end of the progress however the basic combination has to gain a very hearty thumbs up.

A tuner was not included for the tests though a Sansui TU80, Pioneer TX408 or Trio KT5500 should admirably fill the spot for £60-£95. Where amplifier options are sought the Trio KA400, Sansui AU 217 II, JVC JA S22 and Akai AM 2250 come to mind.



Mid-budget system £900

Programme sources: 1. **Ortofon M20FL Super** magnetic cartridge, £55. 2. **SME 3009 Series II ND** universal pickup arm; fixed head version, £60. 3. **Thorens TD160S** 2-speed motor unit; a "souped up" version of the already quite superb TD160 BCII. £140. 4. **Sony TC K81** metal-capable 3-head cassette deck, £250, featuring variable bias and sensitivity/Dolby level, logic-controlled solenoid-assisted transport and Bar Graph peak-reading meters. Amplifier: **Sansui AU317 Mk.2** 65 x 65 watt DC integrated. £160.

Loudspeakers: **Lentek S4**, £250/**Celestion 551**, £350/**Harbeth HL**, £300.

An undoubtedly impressive array of components in what is, arguably, the most satisfying price area in which to find oneself; an area where an unneurotic music-lover with a rational eye on cost-effect can reap very sound rewards indeed. The competition in this region is fairly severe.



Out of the lineup chosen for reference the Sansui is not necessarily the best sounding amplifier available for the cost and the same applies to the SME 3009. A moving-coil pickup cartridge may have provided better results while the deletion of the cassette component will have left a bigger budget to devote to a superior disc-playing system.

There are various specialist manufacturers, mostly British, making fine sounding devices which the hobbyist will always prefer. Among amplifiers the A&R A60E, Sugden A48 II, Quad 33/303, Rogers A100, and items from the ranges of Nytech, Exposure Electronics and others may often provide that nth factor a hi fi buff seeks. Among disc players the Rega decks offer exceptional performance at just over half the cost of the TD160S. It is precisely here that the hi fi treadmill begins.

There are reasons and good ones why these products have not and probably never will reach a wider audience. The degree of involvement it takes to discover and make the most of the more esoteric 'purist'

goods, even where these are moderately price, extends to more than reading International Musician. Above all else the accent behind our mid-price reference system is practicality. To this end the equipment chosen is freely available at retail outlets around the country and do not necessarily need an enthusiast to set them up for optimum performance. The tuner component here again has been left out of the basic system. Interested parties might consider an Optonica ST5100, a JVC JT V6 or Sony ST 560 as examples of good value. For less exacting needs one of the budget tuners earlier mentioned should suffice.

'Super fi' system

Programme sources: 1. **Mission 773** high output moving-coil pickup cartridge, £140. **Mission 774** pickup arm, £140. **Systemdek** two-speed turntable, £250. **Tandberg TCD 440A** 3-head cassette deck, metal-capable and featuring variable bias, adjustable azimuth, Dyneq equalisation and Actilinear recording, £540. **Optonica ST7100H** AM/FM tuner with analogue/digital tuning indication, switchable IF bandwidth, auto-lock and recording calibration tone generator, £189.



Quad 44 pre-amplifier; featuring completely modular input circuitry, variable filters plus tone controls, £270. **Trio LO 5M** "high speed" single-channel DC power amplifiers.

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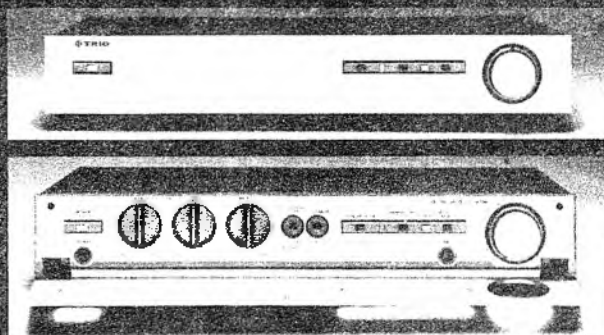
Anyone can design an amplifier which will react fairly quickly to a sudden complex sound (a cymbal for instance). And most people do.

But to design an amplifier which will react in less than one millionth of a second is rather more difficult.

Such an amplifier must by definition have a very short 'rise time' and a very high 'slew rate', particularly for high frequencies and at high outputs.

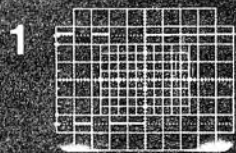
If it doesn't, the output will be distorted, because some of the signal components will be delayed and will emerge out of phase with the rest.

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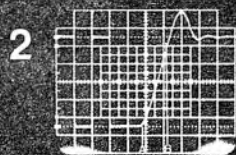


Front panel opens for access to essential controls.

What are 'rise time' and 'slew rate'?

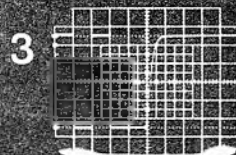


The charts show you. No. 1 defines the input signal. Neat. Square.



No. 2 shows a conventional amplifier response. Look at the rise time (A to B). Look at the slew rate (the slope between A and B).

Now look at Chart 3, taken from the Trio high speed amplifier. See how close both rise time and slew rate are to Chart 1.



Finally, look at the additional distortion at the top of the slope on Chart 2. It shows how a conventional amplifier, in attempting a high speed rise, overshoots and makes things even worse.

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£595. Bowers & Wilkins 801 phase-compensated, 3-unit free-standing loudspeaker systems. £850.

The **Mission** arm and cartridge make an almost faultless combination, and so they should. Structural rigidity in a pickup arm appears to have as much correlation with the ability to resolve finer recorded detail as the suspended sub-chassis principle has with high performance turntable.

The 774 uses a paired race of tempered steel at the pivots which allow very little unwanted "play" in the bearing. The low mass aluminium arm tube has a vestigial cartridge fixing block brazed on its tip and detaches only at the pivot. The loss of rigidity caused by headshell collar fixings is thus sidestepped. When you remember that the finer recorded detail on a disc is only a micron or less long, this sort of attention to detail is the difference. There are again only a handful of arms and cartridges are competing in this league.

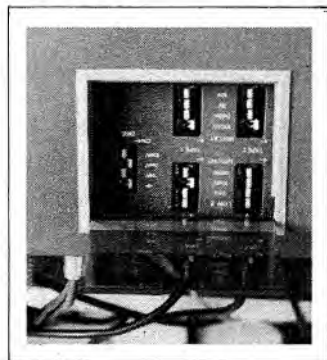
The **Systemdek** is a relatively new force in the arena for good sounding disc players where the competition literally is counted on the fingers of one hand: the **Ariston RD11S**, **JBE Series III**, **STD 305S**, **Technics SL10** and the ubiquitous **Linn Sondek LP12**. The **Systemdek** is picked not only for its indubitable high placing among these few, but also for its superbly rationalised design. Executed in an attractive variety of suede-textured **Nexel** finishes with a lambswool flat mat bonded to the heavy (4.7 kg/10.5 lbs.) platter, the deck is AC synchronous belt-drive using a stressed alloy subframe floating on an undamped three-point spring suspension which offers a near ideal suspension resonance below 4 Hz. On acoustic and structural vibration breakthrough from the listening environment it is in the excellent class.

Among its many strengths the **Systemdek** attacks head-on many of the bugbears which so often consign decks of this status to the committed hi fi enthusiast. The main bearing is a steel spindle turning in an oil bath on a precision ball bearing. A spiral groove up to a keeper at the top pumps oil up the spindle as it revolves. A

smooth turning bearing which has effectively no metal-to-metal contact between spindle and bush results. The principle creates, between the spindle/bush interface, an oil buffer pumped continuously at pressure — and here is the master stroke. The high pressure lubricant does not compress easily and the low-friction layer is therefore also quite rigid.

What the design succeeds in doing is to remove the critical (and costly) machining tolerances usually mandatory in a deck of this singular calibre; after all is said a tight production tolerance is the be-all of a good design executed on a flow-line, whatever the cost or boasts offered. Access for the patient task of balancing and levelling, crucial to optimum results, is made without having to turn the system upside down. And here is another master stroke. Operational drive stability, wow and flutter, and low frequency residuals taken into account with the remaining heirarchy of performance parameters the device is little short of marvellous and a delight to handle.

The tuner included in the basic top system is the **Optonica ST7100H**. This tuner proved itself capable of long-distance 'D-X' reception at our North London location via an ambitious aerial array and a quite superb **BBC/IBA** quality



via a simple indoor dipole. Tuning is via an abbreviated analogue scale next to which is a digital frequency counter readout which reads in kHz for AM. Two 7-segment indicators — a centre-tune row of LEDs and a logarithmically scaled signal strength bar — allow for a high degree of tuning accuracy.

Along with these tuning aids an 'auto-lock' circuit is provid-

ed to correct small tuning errors. Of the row of eight push buttons on the fascia three special application features deserve attention. The switches labelled **Multipath**, **Air Check** and **IF Band Width** are valuable aids to the full exploitation of a tuner's potential benefits. These will be discussed next month in the system assessments.

Backed by a commendably high order of VHF performance the accent behind the range of controls provided is accuracy and the **ST7100H** makes tuning precise and very easy — a winning blend of virtues.

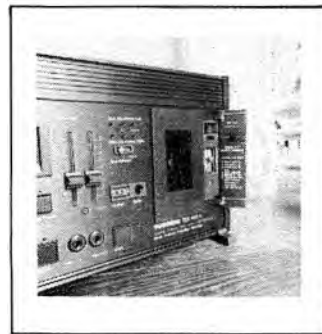
And so to our final source. The basic clutchless three-motor transport mechanism is one **Tandberg** have used with a dual-capstan tape load and solenoid assisted logic controls in their decks over the past few years. Advanced circuit features have been added to arrive at the prestigious **TCD 440A**. An examination of features becomes an examination of the basic premises behind cassette hi fi.

At 15 ips or 30 ips pro open reel decks rarely require much high frequency record equalisation. At its standard speed of 1 7/8 ips a cassette format might require as much as 30 dB of hi pre-emphasis at 18 kHz to provide a flat response. At higher recording levels this amount of boost limits the highest magnetisation levels the head drive circuits can be allowed to pass if tape distortion and hf compression are to be avoided.

The development of higher bias tapes capable of handling higher magnetic flux densities raises the mean signal-to-noise thresholds by allowing a higher signal handling capability at low and middle frequencies. An increased tape coercivity on the other hand improves high frequency performance. (Coercivity is a measure of the current and biasing levels required for a flat frequency). Higher bias ferric tapes, bearing usually the suffix 'I', and the even higher bias suffix 'II' types aim at providing higher recorded densities with less tape saturation.

Metal particle tape is, of course, the current state of the art. Interfacing the precise magnetic characteristics of a

tape with the machine circuits is more crucial with hi fi recording on cassette than it is with high speed open reel. And here basically is the problem. The successful storage of high frequencies call for fairly exact machine adjustments to meet the requirements of the tape in question. A manufacturer might set up the machine on a specific brands of tape and offer unequivocal tape recommendations. The provision of



user adjustments is more expensive though ultimately the best way of providing for an ongoing flexibility in the light of possible future developments.

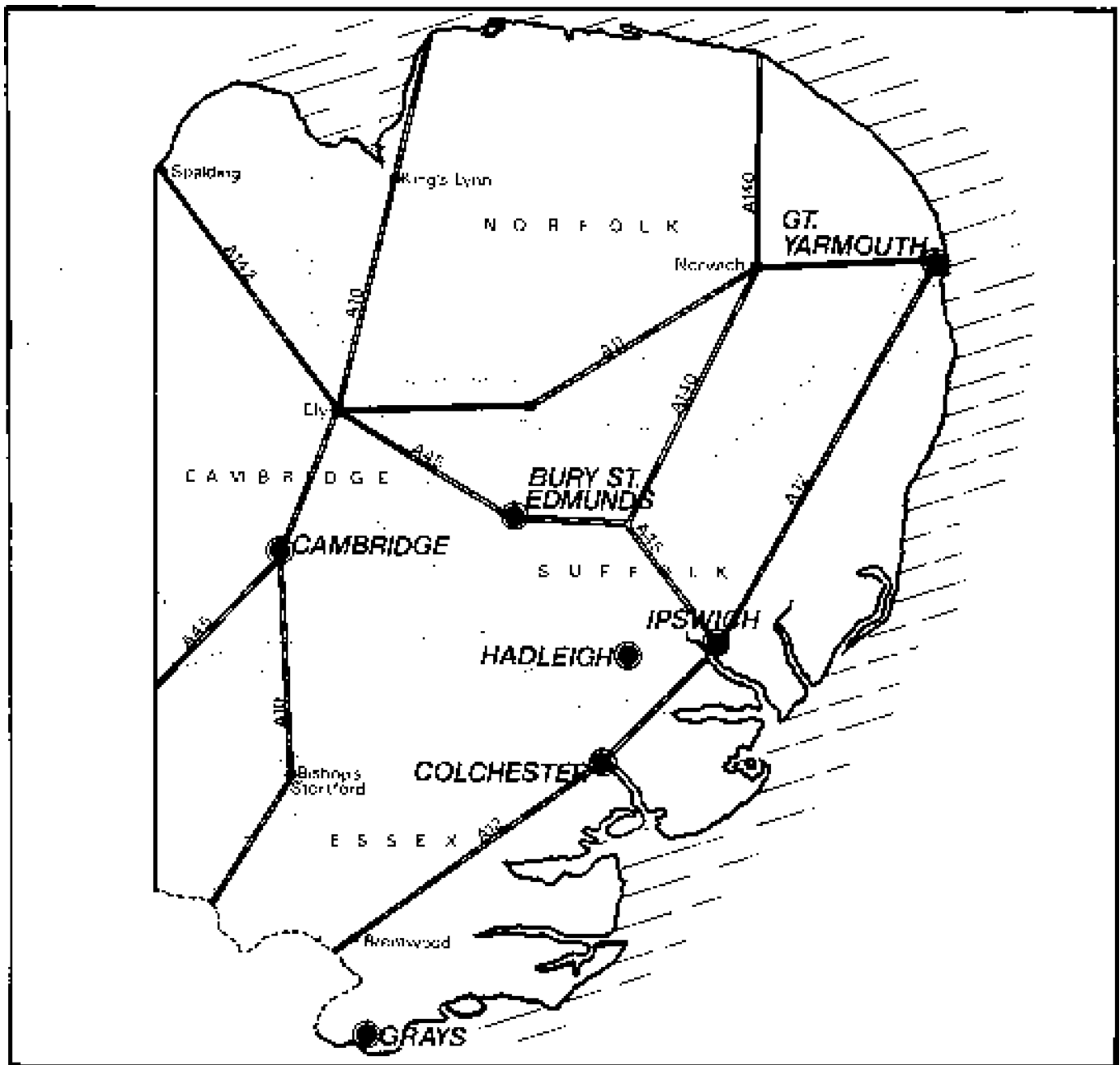
The technique described as **actifnear** is **Tandberg's** way of attacking what is basically a head drive slewing problem and is as successful as the best of alternative techniques adopted by others. More interesting perhaps is their **Dynamic Equalisation System (Dyneq)** which has similarities with the **Dolby HX** system. The high frequency boost is varied by a form of peak limiting circuit which tracks the applied treble pre-emphasis up and down with the programmes hf content.

Whereas full recording equalisation is applied at low signal levels the amount of boost tides with the programme to a point where it theoretically reduces to zero at the highest recorded peaks. As the circuit is tied to the head drive circuits the zero point occurs just before hf tape saturation takes place at any particular tape setting. And it works. More on how it actually performs next month.

Next month we look at how the systems actually work together in the hope that some light is shed on some of the finer points of matching and interfacing.

James McGill

SPOTLIGHT ON ESSEX & EAST ANGLIA



Tim Gentle Music Leigh on Sea – Essex

Tim Gentle Music is a business which has grown from a humble beginning to a flourishing success story. Over the years they have expanded from a small shop on one side of a large building, gradually knocking down the walls and taking over more and more space until in 1979 they finally took over the whole building. And they say they still haven't got enough room.

They specialise in guitars and also sell amps and cabs. They stock "A hell of a range of left-handed instruments"

which is rare. Staff consists of Tim and wife Ruth, Dave (guitar repairs), Phil (amp repairs), and their big claim to fame, Robin Trower's little brother Brad, who apparently looks just like him, plays just like him and on the same guitar!

They stock loads of second-hand gear as a result of their excellent part exchange deals, so if you are looking for accessories or rare guitars this is certainly the place to go. Their address is 1420 London Road, Leigh on Sea, Essex.

Quentor Electronics Norwich

Quentor Electronics are manufacturers of amplification products – everything from small speaker cabs to large bins, all incorporating a wide range of speakers. Their products are all custom made. Another side of their business is building flight cases. They also furnish their local bands with PA, and supply equipment to many varied customers including Anglia Television.

Drum and Guitar Centre Cambridge

The Drum and Guitar Centre make their business clear with their name. They stock only drums and electric guitars and

accessories, including amps. It has existed in this form since 1974 and is situated in Norfolk Street, Cambridge.

The proprietor Bernard Stubbings was a professional drummer for 25 years and therefore knows what he is selling! His son is a guitarist and runs that side of things, and they employ a staff of musicians. Their stock consists of practically all makes of drums, guitars and amps. They do no hire but there is a certain amount of second-hand gear available.

Spaceward Studios Cambridge

Spaceward is a 16-track recording studio which is in Victoria Street in Cambridge. They have one facility which is not often to be found in a 24-track studio let alone a 16-track and that is video, for which a very attractive deal is offered. They have all the usual facilities and also offer production, arrangement, and location and live recording. There is no overtime charge. Their phone number is (0223) 64263.

Cambridge Rock Cambridge

Cambridge Rock is a music store staffed by Steve, Marc Noel Johnson (manager), and Mick Webb. They are at number 44 Newnham Road and have been doing business since 1976. They sell all electric guitars and group gear, and have a customising section and an amp repair service.

They have quite a large PA hire thing going which they will go out and engineer for a band. Their special feature is that they are "no messing, straight guys who will provide a good backup and make a point to treat our customers as humans, not monkeys. And we're both handsome".

Steve and Marc are both experienced musicians — Steve on keyboards and Marc on guitar. Thus they have experienced the whole field of playing, including studio work and are equipped to deal with customers' problems on both the musical and technical levels. They are very critical buyers and all their stock is carefully chosen for value and quality.

Sowter Transformers Ipswich

Sowter Transformers are a small family business who were founded in 1941. They are specialists in audio frequency transformers, including mike transformers, output transformers and bridging transformers, and in fact supply approximately half the major UK manufacturers.

Their products are custom built for the customer's circuit, and their policy of very reasonable prices and readily available friendly advice has always paid off. Dr Sowter will "always be

pleased to look at your technical problems personally and ensure that you receive transformers with optimum performance".

Other areas they specialise in are 100 volt line transformers and loudspeaker transformers. Basically they manufacture many hundreds of designs which can suit most requirements. They endeavour to find out what the market requires by sending out questionnaires to find out about any problems and then eliminate them. The company is noted for its good service. Because of its size they are able to be very flexible about things like delivery and always do their best to suit the customer's convenience.

Honky Tonk Music Hadleigh, Essex

Honky Tonk Music was started in 1975 by ex-professional drummer Pete Brewer. They started out with one shop, added the shop next door in 1976, and in 1977 the wall between the two was knocked down turning it into its now large and spacious form.

The shop manager is Phil Straker, looking after the guitar and keyboards section, and the drum shop manager is Gerard Beart. There is also a full-time engineer working in the service department and he is Dick Straker, Phil's dad. Pete Brewer is the big white chief.

They specialise in group gear, i.e. they have no electric organs, mandolins or even acoustic guitars. Consequently they are able to stock a large selection of the things they specialise in. As far as drums are concerned they have the agency for every make that exists, mainly because they are the only drum shop in the South East Essex area. Stock consists of an extensive range of guitars, amps and keyboards.

Accessories are very much a feature since they consider these to be very important. They stock over 1,000 drum heads which are on show in racks for customers to see, they have about 1200 pairs of drumsticks — all makes and sizes, and about 150 cymbals. You will also find about 40 new

drumkits and a large number of second-hand ones as well.

They do quite a lot of second-hand gear and have found that there is a good market for it in the area. Any second-hand gear comes with a six month guarantee. Honky Tonk is situated at 300-302 London Road, Hadleigh, near Southend.

Allen's Music Great Yarmouth

Allen's Music can be found in Broad Row in Great Yarmouth. Run by Eric Lund and John Allens they deal purely in group gear — guitars, amps, PA equipment and keyboards. They also own the shop next door and there they deal with educational instruments. Thus the two areas are clearly defined.

The group gear side of things has only been in operation for 15 months and they have recently expanded it. They now have four showrooms — three on the ground floor and one upstairs. One of these is reserved solely for percussion and keyboards.

A special feature is their own range of PA speakers and they specialise in house systems for holiday camps etc. They have a workshop with Eric Lund as the resident engineer. Resident guitar repairer is Clive who came from John Birch. They stock a wide range of everything, specialising in Peavey amps. They also stock a good range of AKG, Shure, and Beyer mikes. The hire service includes PA gear up to 1500 watts.

Sounds Plus Bury St Edmunds

Opened in November 1979, Sounds Plus deal in group gear and a bit of disco but the two things are in completely separate departments. They are the main dealers for HH and stock a wide range of all the top makes — Marshall, Carlsbro, Maine, Vox, Laney and Roland. In the guitar line they sell a good range including Gibsons and Fenders, and also the usual selections of copies such as Antoria.

The shop is run by partners Ray Broome and John Balaam, and the manager's name is

Nigel Heffer. Nigel also has an assistant in Sue Tovey.

The shop also does quite a lot of second-hand gear. They don't aim to be a "discount" house preferring to concentrate their energies on giving a good service and making sure that they stock what they have said they do etc. Hire is something that they are already doing on a relatively small scale and within the next month or so they will be converting the shop next door, which they have just bought, into a PA and Gear Hire Centre. Another very handy feature of this shop is the repair department where they can cater for anything including guitar refinishing, refretting and respraying.

Sounds Plus can be found at 6-8 Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds, which is in the middle of Suffolk where everybody "wears Wellington boots and walks around with a straw in their mouths". (Well that's what the man told me.)

Axe Music Colchester

Axe Music, specialising in good quality guitars and amps, are at 16 Mersey Road in Colchester. They operate a PA hire service, and their repair workshop caters for electronic and guitar repairs and also customising.

They have a dealer franchise with many of the main companies including Maine, Traynor, Acoustics, Ibanez, Yamaha, Odyssey, Martin and the new Vantage guitars, and they stock Dean Markley strings.

The staff are all guitarists, Dave Harwood being the manager and Alan Gray owns the place. Dave Hunter is a freelance electronics engineer and is in Axe's workshop 50 per cent of the time, the rest of the time he takes the work home. Axe are expanding rapidly, and this month sees the opening of a new branch in Ipswich which will be managed by Ashley Dow, another guitarist.

The shop has been running for 3½ years now and the area where they concentrate their energies most, is in giving the customer careful personal attention and a reliable backup service.

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- (3) Drums

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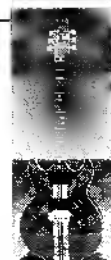
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MARKET REPORT

DEALER ADDRESS	CONTACT	WHAT IS THE BEST SELLING ARIA PRODUCT	HOW DO THEY COMPARE WITH OTHER MANUFACTURERS	WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON CRITICISM	WHAT IS THE BEST SELLING POINT OF ARIA PRODUCTS
Allan Billington 172 Park View, Welling	Phil Archer	T.S.B. Series	Quality very good	None	Visually attractive. Enormous talking point extreme confidence on dealers part
Potters Music 18 Hill Rise, Richmond, Surrey	Mr Gerry Potter	J.J. Acoustic	Better value	None	Reliability + playability
Soundwave 66 Victoria Rd., Romford, Essex	Phil	S.B. Bass	Very good	None	Value for money
Salop Music Centre Unit One, Town Walls, Shrewsbury	Henry	S.B. Bases	Knock spots of them	None	Workmanship (high standard) Very well made product
Shady Grove Music 14 Church St., Runcorn, Cheshire	Bob Thomas	S.B. Bases	Better in general quality	None	Quality and sound
John Ham 75 Mansel St., Swansea	Gerald	Semi Acoustics and solid	On par with the majority	None	Shockingly low price
Knights, 41 East St., Chichester.	David Clifton	YS 300	The best of copy products	None	Overall finish and comes in set up
Biggles 182 Kings Rd., Bristol	Mr Steve Hogarth	Birdie MX100	The best supplied, service backed up guitars and small amp importers in the UK	Unavailability of SB series Bases	Quality of workmanship at any price
Russell Acott 125 High St., Oxford	Mr G. Ansell	Acoustic Range	Very well	None	Good finish, good playability
Funkshun, 158 Wellingborough Road, Northants	Mr Gary Tyler	SB series Bases	Long way ahead of everyone else	None at all	Incorporate all the features you would expect from a guitar at twice the price
Carlsbro Sound Centre 182-184 Chesterfield Rd., Mansfield	Mr Malcolm Jennings	SB series Bases	Very good	Range slightly confusing	General playability and set up. Value for money
Unisound, 213 Kilburn High Rd., London	Clifford	SB series Bases	Very well	None at all	Extremely good quality for a reasonable price
Dave Simms 1-5 The Grove, Ealing	John Ward	SB 600	Very favourably	None	Finish and set up. Playability
Holiday Music 579 High Rd., Leytonstone	Steve Jolly	SB series range	Very good, better than most	Very little	Combination of finish, value for money, action
John Kings Music 8 Richmond Rd., Kingston	Mr Graham	SB Bass guitars	Wipe the floor	Too many models	Well set up and their cases



MARKET REPORT

DEALER ADDRESS	CONTACT	WHAT IS THE BEST SELLING ARIA PRODUCT	HOW DO THEY COMPARE WITH OTHER MANUFACTURERS	WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON CRITICISM	WHAT IS THE BEST SELLING POINT OF ARIA PRODUCTS
Music Market 15 Market St., Kettering	Dick Rabell	SB range of Basses and the PE 1000	Very favourably	No adverse criticism	Width of range and exceptional value for money
Wishers, 77 Osmanston Rd., Derby	Mark Hopkins	SB 1000 Bass	Extremely well	Some buyers disapprove of the appearance of neck/body join	Price is number one, general appearance when delivered
ABC Music 14-16 High St., Addlestone	Kim Josephs	SB 1000	Very well indeed, best value for money	Hard to find criticism	Well constructed, good value for money
Mary's Music, 40-42 Whalley St., Accrington	Mr Mortimer	PE460	Very well, quality and price	Machine heads take a little understanding	Quality and price
Charles Taphouse, 10-11 Parsons St., Banbury	Richard Taphouse — Glen Derges	SB1000 Bass + LC 440	Best Japanese manufacturer	None	Quality for money
Yardleys, 89 Old Snow Hill, Birmingham	Rod Stevens	Guitars	Very good value for money	Lack of supply	Well made, reasonably priced
Music Stores 18 Counce St., Blackpool.	Mr O'Dea	All under £250	The best	None	Value for money
Knights, 41 East St., Chichester	David Clifton	Basses	More popular with customers	None	Good standard, complete spectrum of market
Croydon Music Studios 40 Station Rd., W. Croydon	Mr Hersey	Bass guitars	Better value for money	None	The name. Guitar already set up
Dick Middleton Music 51 Quarry St., Guildford	Dick Middleton	Basses SB range	Very favourably price and quality	Necks a bit fat	Good finish
Bedford Musical Industries 58 Midland Road, Bedford	Lyndon Norman	90 per cent are good	Far superior	None	Price and quality
Soundwave Music Centre 51 Gwent Square, Cumbern	Mrs James	Semi Acoustics	Very good only guitars already set up	None	Quality for price
Abbey Music 5-6 Market Place, Burton-on-Trent.	Terry Hale	Guitars	Better than most	None	Value for money
Kingfisher Music 20 Kings Rd Fl661	Kathy Fisher	Bass Guitars	Compare favourably with guitars three times the price	None	Quality, value for money



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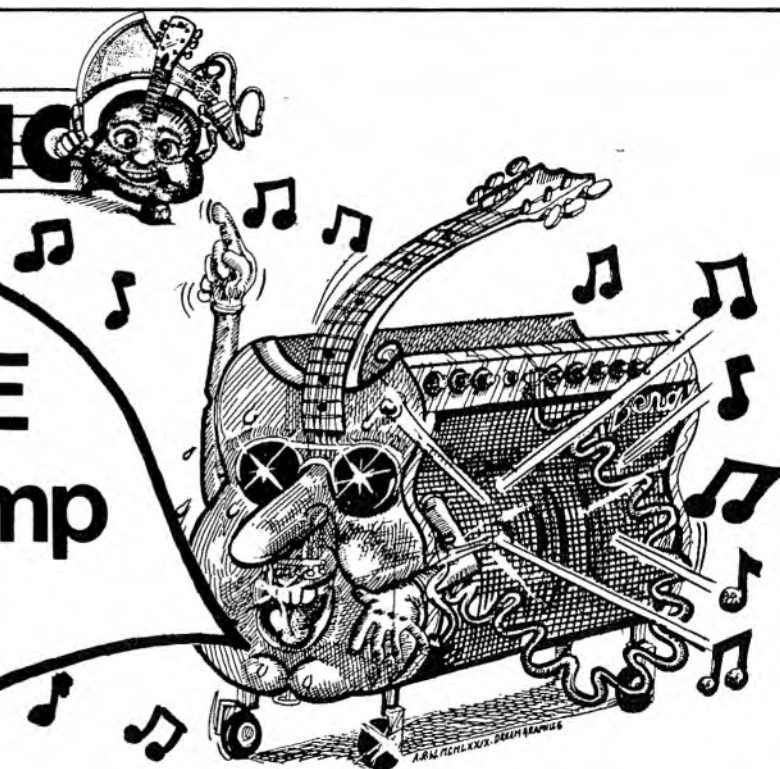
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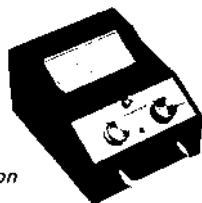
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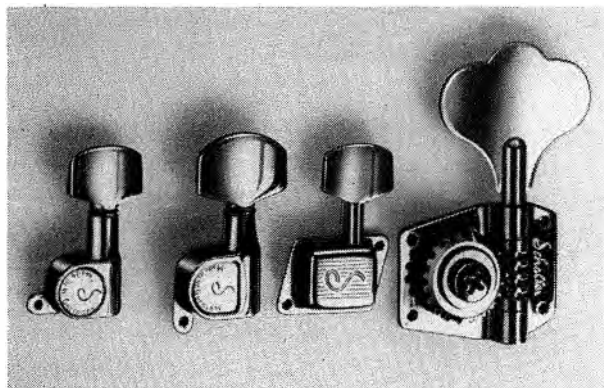
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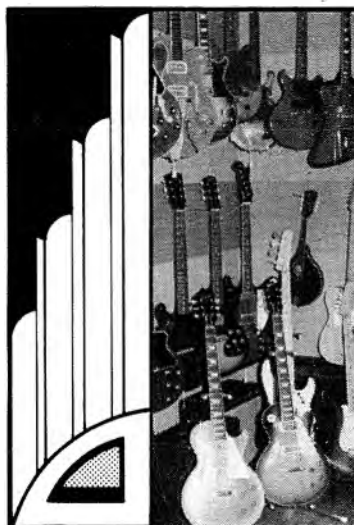
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tba. SM.

2.) 8T £75 p/d Cap 10. f-F. R-R. CP. Ka.
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SM.

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SM.

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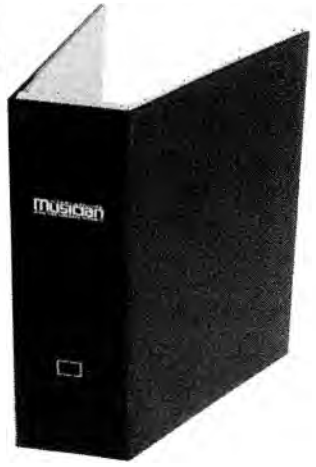
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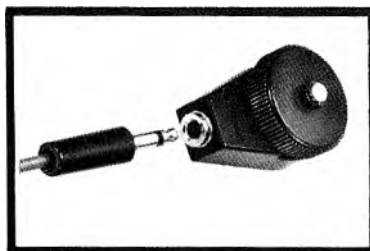
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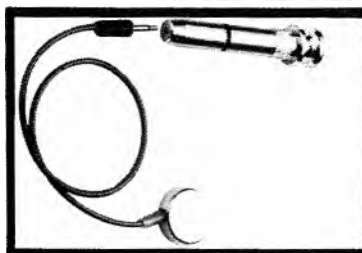
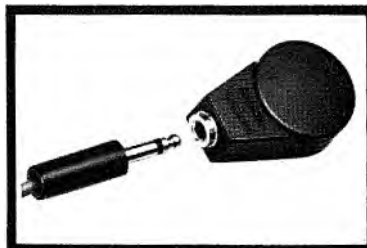


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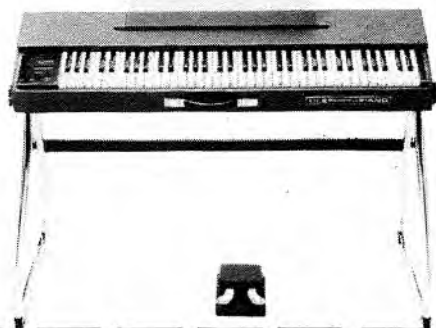


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